

Introduction

All things organic are dying in the trap of organization. An artificial world is permeating and poisoning the natural. Civilization has itself become a machine that does, or tries to do, everything in mechanical fashion. We think only in horsepower now; we cannot look at a waterfall without mentally turning it into electric power; we cannot survey a countryside full of pasturing cattle without thinking of its exploitation as a source of meat supply; we cannot look at the beautiful old handwork of a lively and primitive people without wishing to replace it by a modern technical process. Whether it has meaning or not, our technical thinking must have its actualization. *The luxury of the Machine is the consequence of a necessity of thought.* In the final analysis, the Machine is a *symbol*—like its secret ideals, perpetual motion—a spiritual and intellectual necessity, but not a vital one.—OSWALD SPENGLER, *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*, 1932, emphasis added

Yet, if we reflect upon our experience as observers, we discover that whatever we do as such happens to us. In other words, we discover that our experience is that we find ourselves observing, talking or acting, and that any explanation or description of what we do is secondary to our experience of finding ourselves in the doing of what we do.—HUMBERTO R. MATURANA, “Reality: The Search for Objectivity or the Quest for a Compelling Argument,” 1988

A theory in its most basic form is simply an explanation for why we do the things we do.—LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE SIMPSON, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, 2011

From this brief review, it can be readily seen that Aboriginal traditional knowledge has a very different paradigmatic base from that of Western knowledge. Whereas Western knowledge operates from a linear, singular view, whereas Western knowledge views the world from order beneath chaos, whereas Western languages are very noun oriented, knowledge is about you (first person) in relation to everything else in a relativistic sense. Aboriginal knowledge has a very different “coming to know.” It is holistic and cyclical; it views the world from chaos underneath order; its languages are process and action oriented. Knowledge is about participation in and with the natural world. Policy and research implications arising out of Aboriginal paradigms cannot be underestimated. . . . If Aboriginal paradigms are not taken into consideration, policy, research, and the “humanities” will simply miss the mark.—LEROY LITTLE BEAR, “Traditional Knowledge and Humanities: A Perspective by a Blackfoot,” 2012

Biskaabiiyang [looking back, returning to ourselves] research *is a process through which Anishinaabe researchers evaluate how they personally have been affected by colonization, rid themselves of the emotional and psychological baggage they carry from this process, and then return to ancestral traditions. . . .* With Biskaabiiyang methodologies, an individual must recognize and deal with this negative kind of thinking before conducting research.—WENDY MAKOONS GENIUSZ, quoted by LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE SIMPSON, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 2011, emphasis added

Within Nishnaabeg theoretical foundations, Biskaabiiyang does not literally mean returning to the past, but rather re-creating the cultural and political flourishing of the past to support the well-being of our contemporary citizens. *It means reclaiming the fluidity around our traditions, not the rigidity of colonialism.* It means encouraging the self-determination of individuals within our national and community-based contexts; and it means recreating an artistic and intellectual renaissance within a larger political and cultural resurgence. When I asked my Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Elder Gidigaa Migizi about Biskaabiiyang, the term immediately resonated with him; when English terms such as “resistance” and “resurgence” did not.—LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE SIMPSON, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 2011, emphasis added

According to the prevailing traditional European epistemologies, knowledge has mainly been gained through observation and reasoning. However, in traditional Chinese thought, knowledge has been understood in a much broader sense, namely as something which also (or primarily) stems from moral contents and which cannot be separated from (social) practice. The method which determined most of the epistemological teachings found in the Chinese classics was *based on a holistic world view*, and was directed towards a comprehension which could be achieved through education and learning. The basic contents of these teachings were rooted in the premises of pragmatic and utilitarian ethics. *Chinese epistemology was relational . . . meaning that it understood the external world to be ordered structurally, while the human mind was also structured in accordance with its all-embracing but open, organic system (li, 理). The relational correspondence between the cosmic and mental structures thus represents the basic precondition of human perception and comprehension.*—JANA ROŠKER, “Epistemology in Chinese Philosophy,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, emphasis added

I Prolegomenon

The Politics of Decolonial Investigations aims at healing colonial wounds and shrinking the wide spectrum of Western overconfidence to its own size.¹ Colonial wounds are inflicted in all areas of lived experience, human and nonhuman, physical and mental, by the recursive enactment of the “arrogance of power.”² No living organism at this point in time is immune to coloniality, no less the changing cast of actors running the institutions that maintain coloniality under the rhetoric of modernity celebrating change, development, the cybernetic revolution, AI, and democracy as unquestionable victories. These decolonial investigations shall unveil the underlying logic that has tricked all of us on planet Earth under the mirage of the universality of knowledge and of human destiny, as well as reconsider the cosmogonies and cosmologies that never sought to divide us from the living energy of planet Earth and the cosmos. These investigations shall contribute to rebuilding and reenacting our parameters of knowing and sensing and to the restitution of our love and mutual respect; it aims to restore the *communal*, encompassing the relationality of the human species with/in all the living universe, which has been destituted by the *social*, severing the human species from the cosmic planetary energy and the will to live for far too long.

Most of the newspaper accounts and other mass media discussions I have witnessed in the US since COVID-19 appeared in China have a common concern,

a spine that connects their different points of view: when and how the coronavirus will affect the financial markets and the economic prospects for the nation. It reminds me of similar news and the discussions during the 2008 “crisis”: their main concern was to save the banks and capitalism. While it was acknowledged that capitalism was not perfect, an understatement under the circumstances, it was concluded that there was not a better alternative.

In both crises, two levels of knowledge have been at work: the *doxa* (common belief, popular opinion) on the one hand, and the *episteme* (knowledge, logical and scientific understanding) on the other. Mainstream political economy and political theory have provided the epistemic foundation transmitted within the public sphere. In this book, I try to show how and why the politics of decolonial inquiry and analysis must be oriented toward changing the assumptions and presuppositions—not just the contents—that currently validate Western political economy, political theory, and the opinions transmitted by the corporate media to the public at large. Following Anibal Quijano I call this reorientation *epistemic reconstitution*.

In his groundbreaking short essay, published in 1992, Quijano reoriented the task of decolonization vis-à-vis what decolonization meant during the Cold War: to expel the settlers so the natives could govern themselves. The governing institution was the nation-state without questioning the political theory and political economy upon which nation-states came into being. In view of the failure of the nation-state as a means to decolonization, Quijano turned to confront the hegemonic totality of knowledge that constituted the idea of Western modernity and to conceive the task of decolonization as epistemological reconstitution. He wrote:

The critique of *the European paradigm of rationality/modernity* is indispensable, even more, urgent. But it is doubtful if the criticism consists of a simple negation of all its categories; of the dissolution of reality in discourse; of the pure negation of the idea and the perspective of totality in cognition. It is necessary to extricate oneself from the linkages between rationality/modernity and coloniality, first of all, and definitely from all power which is not constituted by free decisions made by free people. It is the instrumentalization of the reasons for power, of colonial power in the first place, which produced distorted paradigms of knowledge and spoiled the liberating promises of modernity. . . . *First of all, epistemological decolonization, as decoloniality*, is needed to clear the way for new intercultural communication, for an interchange of experiences and meanings, as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some

universality. Nothing is less rational, finally, than the pretension that the specific cosmic vision of a particular ethnies should be taken as universal rationality, even if such an ethnies is called Western Europe because this is actually pretend[ing] to impose a provincialism as universalism. (Emphasis added.)³

Although Quijano's expression is "epistemological reconstitution," the overwhelming attention he has paid since then to subjectivity and the control of the senses, rendered by Nelson Maldonado-Torres as "coloniality of being," suggests that the reconstitution shall be both epistemological and ontological, which is a claim in this book.⁴ Furthermore, as ontology cannot be reduced to pure materiality, coloniality of being in the world involves and presupposes coloniality of the senses. In the European paradigm of modernity/rationality, the coloniality of the senses has been enacted by modern and Western aesthetics: the entire field of philosophical aesthetics has been, since the late eighteenth century, an effective instrument to colonize aesthesis. Because knowledge (both epistemic and doxastic) controls and manages the subjectivity (aesthesis) of the population affected by it, decolonial reconstitution needs to be both epistemic and doxastic (which carries the weight of sensing and believing).⁵ My goal for this book is to help change the terms of the conversations (the presuppositions, assumptions, and enunciations), sustaining the "European paradigm of modernity/rationality" and hiding its darker side, coloniality. I will return to this point in section III.3.

This is a book about "coloniality of power" and its consequences, topics on which I have spent virtually the last twenty-five years of my life, researching, teaching, writing, thinking, and working with other people in the same path. Quijano's concepts of "coloniality" and "coloniality of power" have revealed to us the darker side of modernity. They have uncovered the reality that there cannot be "power" without a modifier. Power without a modifier is a modern concept posited as the universal.⁶ It remains caught within the regional limitations and the too often dubious assumptions of Western universality. What options are left for decoloniality as epistemic reconstitution after the closing of the Third World and the demise of the socialist bloc in a world order reshaped by, on the one hand, the projects of de-Westernization and multipolarity and, on the other hand, the efforts to maintain the privileges of five hundred years of Westernization, by engaging in a renewed effort of re-Westernization to maintain the privileges of unipolarity?⁷ Yet in the turmoil of everyday life, the attention of millions of people across the planet is sucked into the increasing flow of traffic on the information highway, to the extent that no time or energy

is left for thinking beyond the demands of the iPhone to which our eyes are glued like magnets. The magnitude of the geopolitical sphere, including the mass and social media that manipulate sensing and emotioning, is such that no future can be glimpsed beyond the offices of the current managers of global designs. COVID-19 made many aware that technological control of the population could find in the pandemic a reason to be increased. Yes, I would say: management and control of the population has always been inscribed in the colonial matrix of power. This is just the latest turn of the screw.

We only and always live in the constant flux of the present. What is being done in the present will guide the future of the global order and of everyday life—what shall be preserved, what shall be changed, who shall participate in decision making, and who is being made destitute. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a lot of pressure on the present; decisions and options have been made that would orient what is to come. Never in the history of humankind have pandemic and economic turmoil happened at the same time. The darker side of Western modernity has emerged in all its “splendor.” Under these conditions and given the present world order, the near future seems to hang on three trajectories. One is offered by re-Westernization—a counterrevolution that many like myself believe is getting out of hand—to retain the privileges of unipolarity. The second is offered by de-Westernization’s confrontation of unipolarity, opening up a world order that is multipolar and already here. Both are state-led politics. The third trajectory is decolonization/decoloniality led by the emerging global and diverse political society, taking their/our destinies in their/our own hands.⁸

Decolonial epistemic reconstitutions, and the politics of decolonial investigations, aim to overcome the hegemony of the “European paradigm of modernity/rationality” and take the first two trajectories (de-Westernization and re-Westernization) as a field of investigation. As a matter of fact, setting up the current world order as the conflict between the rise of de-Westernization and the counterrevolution of re-Westernization is a decolonial conceptualization of epistemic reconstitutions to understand the current world order emerging from five hundred years of Westernization. Decolonization as decoloniality, as I present it here, having epistemic and ontological reconstitution as its main goal, offers a conceptual apparatus of knowing and understanding and a visionary *utopia of sustainable economies* (not sustainable development) to live in harmony and plenitude. (See chapter 14.)⁹

In the meantime, the scenario depicted by Oswald Spengler in 1932 in the epigraph to this introduction will continue to deteriorate. The machine alienates the human species from its own kind, distancing the killer from the killed.

Thousands of miles may span between the decider and the target, with the button-presser carrying out orders somewhere in between. Spared any risk of personal accountability, institutions' public call for the care of human beings diverts attention from their profit at the cost of lost lives. The disruption of the planet is justified in the name of "development," destituting the possibilities of sustainable economies to live in harmony. COVID-19 has made this hypocrisy hard to watch: while civil and political society confronting the state and corporations worried about their grandparents, their sick sisters, their friends without face masks, and their jobs, corporations carefully watched the cost.

The arguments that I unfold in this book are the results of two decades of sustained investigation into questions outlined in the previous paragraphs: our global order, daily life, and the intersection between them. All are embedded in the overall frame of modernity/coloniality, and they both encompass the international, the domestic, and the private and public spheres. All the chapters in this book deal with diverse aspects of the historical foundation, transformation, management of, and consequences to the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality, as well as dissent thereof, and the praxes of reconstitution and restitution, all of which I address in more detail in section III of this introduction. The basic presuppositions guiding these investigations are as follows. By "coloniality of power" I mean the energy driving the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of actors that built an apparatus of management as well as the colonial matrix of power (CMP) sustaining them. Coloniality of power is the *technics* of domination and CMP the instrument. I am building here on Oswald Spengler: "*Technics is the tactics of life*. It is the inner form of the *process* utilized in that struggle which is identical with life itself. . . . *Technics is not to be understood in terms of tools*. What matters is not how one fashions things, *but the process of using them*" (emphasis in the original).¹⁰

I will use in this book the term "praxis/es of living" instead of "tactics of life." The change of vocabulary is made, simply, to reflect Spengler's life experience and disciplinary training on the one hand and my own grounded praxis of living on the other. At stake here is the geopolitics of knowing, sensing, and believing.¹¹ Both coloniality of power and CMP are disguised by the rhetoric of modernity: a overwhelming set of discourses, oral and written, write this script. Both fixed and moving images accompanied by soundtrack wind round and round the reel, projecting an image of the world, natural and cultural, upon the mind of the people as if it were the world itself. The rhetoric of modernity settled and maintains the "European paradigm of modernity/rationality," in Quijanos's words. Apart from modernity, which is a concept

that emerged in Europe, the rest are decolonial concepts that emerged in and from the South American Andes: Third World concepts in a way. You won't find them either in the social sciences and the humanities or in their North Atlantic hub; neither in western Europe nor in the US. Modernity is a European concept of which the Renaissance and the Enlightenment are two historical pillars. Modernity/coloniality is a decolonial concept, and though some distinguish between modernity and coloniality, I never do because coloniality is constitutive of modernity. This is a basic premise of the collective whole known by the compound modernity/coloniality/decoloniality. Coloniality and modernity/coloniality did not emerge in academe either and are unrelated to any specific discipline. Both concepts became prominent in public sphere debates in the early 1990s as an outcome of previous conversations about economic dependency in South America in which Quijano was heavily involved. Consequently, the sustained decolonial investigations I submit to the reader of this book are grounded in the genealogy of thoughts inherited from the 1960s by debates on economic dependency. At the time, economic and political dependency was the main concern. But Quijano expanded it to all domains of life (culture, subjectivity, everyday life) and explored the historic-structural dependency managed by the European paradigm of modernity/coloniality. In other words, he broadened the scope by the coloniality of power technics and its instrument, the CMP. However, this book intends to continue the energies of dissent that the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality provoked: decoloniality both in its variegated manifestations in the political society and in the domain of decolonial investigations, epistemological (knowing) and ontological (being, sensing, emotioning—*aesthesis*) reconstitutions.

Although Quijano was trained in sociology, coloniality—short for the coloniality of power (*colonialidad del poder*)—was not introduced as a sociological concept but as a decolonial one. This means that coloniality of power and decoloniality, in this specific sense, were mutually created. Coloniality was a decolonial concept, and decoloniality, in this local configuration and not as a universal concept, acquired its meaning by bringing coloniality of power to light. There are many other meanings and uses of “decolonization,” either in a strong political sense or sometimes as a metaphor, that are based on different presuppositions and do not necessarily take coloniality of power (and CMP) as the basic frame of analysis and as the prison house that decolonial doing and thinking aim to delink. My own work is limited to and grounded on the indissociable foundation of the decolonial analytics of the coloniality of power on the one hand and its political, ethical, and epistemic/philosophical consequences on the other.

The correlations between coloniality of power and decoloniality can be illustrated by analogy to the correlations between the unconscious and psychoanalysis. In Freud's work, the unconscious is a psychoanalytic concept, regardless of whether the word existed before his coinage of it and regardless of the fact that human beings (and animals too) have had dreams since the beginning of time: dreams aren't exclusive to the end of the nineteenth century, nor is their analysis. People have been analyzing their dreams from the moment they began to dream. But thanks to Freud, psychoanalytic analysis is credited to him and catalogued to that time. Freud created an indissociable bond between the analysis of the unconscious and the human mind itself to the extent that psychoanalysis and our unconscious workings became mutually constitutive and remain so to this day. Following this analogy, in the same way that psychoanalysis reveals hidden dimensions of the mind inaccessible to our conscious thought, decolonial thinking and decolonial analytics reveal the work of the colonial matrix of power, the hidden structure of Western civilization. This book is about the coloniality of power and its world-making instrumentalization, the CMP. The colonial matrix of power is—allow me to repeat—the instrumental and conceptual structure (which I will analyze in section III of this introduction) that the coloniality of power creates to enforce its regime of domination, management, and control. Going a step further with my analogy to Freud, I would add that while psychoanalytic investigations foster a therapeutic cure, decolonial investigations invite decolonial healing. Psychoanalysis deals with traumas, decoloniality with colonial wounds. This book is about understanding how the CMP governs us, and, in its boomerang effect, governs the actors implementing control and domination in the name of progress, development, and democracy. Such understanding is of the essence to know when, where, and how to delink and engage in communal praxis of decolonial healing through epistemic (of knowledge and ways of knowing) and aesthetic (being, sensing, and believing) reconstitution, which was the task Quijano assigned to decolonial thinking and doing at the end of the Cold War. This book, thirty years later, offers a decolonial praxis of Quijano's concept for our time.¹²

Colonial wounds are inflicted epistemically (based on knowing, knowledge), although their effects are ontological/aesthetic: they transform a person's sensing, believing, and emotioning. Physical colonial wounds always have a psychological dimension. It's one thing to be physically wounded in an accident, for example, and another to know that the physical wound is related to coloniality of power. Dehumanization is likewise epistemic/aesthetic, justifying violence and physical wounds in turn. If you are labeled a terrorist, an epistemic/aesthetic wound is inflicted on you, opening the gates to all kinds of

physical violence by this name. Someone's "knowledge" makes you a terrorist, not what you do, and that affects your sensing and emotioning (aesthesis) for better or worse once you know you have been identified as such. Replace "terrorist" with "Black," "gay," "LGTBQ," "Chinese," "Iranian," etc., and you will understand the vast domain in which imperial and colonial differences operate to inflict colonial wounds (and imperial ones, too, when interstate relations are at work). Knowing and sensing are interrelated and indissociable dimensions of human cognition and of our human praxis (set of practices and routines) of living. You cannot know without sensing and you cannot sense without knowing. Mathematics is *not* an exception, for it is the rhetoric of modernity that separated math and logic from the senses. The body in pain (moral and physical) is altered and diminished in its potentialities for knowing, sensing, and believing. In effect, the body's potential is restricted and/or deformed in its ability to know, to feel, to believe, to emotion. (I am indeed using "emotion" as a verb intentionally.) Beyond physical acts of violence legitimized by coloniality in the name of modernity (e.g., wounded protesters, Blacks harassed as suspected criminals, Indians feared as dangerous, LGTBQ persons shamed as disturbing, etc.), colonial wounds can be inflicted in a wide array of harm beyond the physical and emotional pain of individuals alone.

Indeed, colonial epistemic and aesthetic wounds affect vast sectors of the population of a given country via domestic policies and international relations, such as sanctions and debts on the receiving end. (By "aesthetic," I refer to an effect on the senses, not the perception of beauty.) Two marks of colonial wounds are racism and sexism. Neither racism nor sexism (across the entire spectrum from gendered heteronormativity to LGTBQ and "Two Spirits" people) are based on any ontic "substance" but are the outcomes of social classifications. Furthermore, social classifications are a question of knowledge (epistemic) that encroaches on and modulates sensing and believing (aesthesis). Decolonially speaking, social classifications are *inventions* not *representations*, which means that "race" and "sex" do not carry in themselves the ontic meaning of biological organs and the organism in which they are imbedded; rather, they are the target of meaning projected and world-making by actors, institutions, and languages (see section III of this introduction) that control knowing and knowledge and regard their own sensing as "normal and natural." If, then, classifications are created that inflict colonial wounds as a result, then they are not created *ex nihilo*. No, they are made by presumptive creators of the world order who intend to imply that their classifications unquestioningly represent the world "as is." Such classifications that *count*, that are accepted as representations of fact, are human, subjective classifications that bring with

them a larger, institutional legitimacy that disqualifies and dehumanizes other human beings. “Representation” is a keyword in the rhetoric of modernity. It presupposes that the purpose of existence is to be represented, and by so doing manages and controls its meaning. That is the world of the coloniality of power and the instrumental structure it creates, CMP, and that is the rhetoric of its disguises. As a result, healing colonial wounds becomes an epistemic and systemic issue rather than a personal one. It is not the personal history that provokes the wound, but the systemic history of coloniality of power that inflicts colonial wounds, regardless of your personal experience. Furthermore, healing colonial wounds cannot be achieved without delinking from CMP because individual healing cannot happen in the same epistemic frame of CMP that inflicts colonial wounds. Psychoanalysis operates within the same frame that provokes the trauma in the individual. The ego is confronted by a society that creates desires that not all individuals can fulfill. Decolonial healing requires one to delink from the paradigm of European modernity/rationality that engenders the wound in the same society it creates.

If colonial wounds are consequences of systemic and hierarchical social classifications, and social classifications are hierarchical epistemic inventions disguised as representations, then healing colonial wounds becomes a matter of epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution, as I have explained so far. It is an epistemic matter because social classifications disguised as (scientific) representations must be reconstituted in response to the needs and sensibilities of the people classified and ranked, rather than of those doing the ranking. The aesthetic comes into play as well, because colonial wounds are epistemic *modi operandi* that affect the sensibility and the emotions of the people classified. Racism and sexism, invoked above, are clear cases in point. Hence, epistemic (of knowledge and knowing) and aesthetic (sensing, believing, being) reconstitution are two aspects of the same phenomenon, and they are of extreme relevance in decolonial arguments. Their conjoining simply reflects the fact that decolonial epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution restores to the sphere of knowing and understanding the fundamental role of the senses, beliefs, and emotions in all ranges of knowledge, knowing, and understanding.

At this point it should be clarified that by “knowledge” I am not referring here only to encyclopedias, libraries, and canonical figures in every discipline, whether theological or secular.¹³ I am saying that hegemonic knowledge is stored and canonized, and this storage and its all-too-often later canonization is grounded on the myth of the archive—the notion that our knowledge simply grows, creating a body of truth, rather than a dynamic reality that knowledge changes with knowing over time, much of it being discarded as false in

the sphere of science or modified in the knowing of everyday living in communities for whom academic, scholarly, and scientific knowledge is perfectly irrelevant. Other areas in which scientific knowledge could be irrelevant are in state and corporative politics, as we have witnessed with climate change and COVID-19. The threat that this process embodies—from the introduction in the West of the Chinese printing press to the digital archives of today—is that this accumulation and conceptual hegemony becomes legitimized by the materiality of the archive. Grounded in church teachings, the conquistadors’ “knowledge” that Indigenous peoples either had no souls or had souls possessed by the devil utterly set aside and vitiated Indigenous world-sensing and ways of knowing, not to mention enabling acts of murder and enslavement. Archival knowledge, such as that based on fifteenth-century interpretations of scripture, justified the devaluation of oral knowledge as well as a great deal of holistic Indigenous world-sensing concerning humans’ place in the cosmos that appear increasingly wise and relevant today. But this is another area in which state and corporate politics will discard, ignore, or, if necessary, repress. Behind the state and its corporations, coloniality of power looms large while the CMP provides the tools for disavowals and repression.

In brief, the constitution of Western knowledge (“the European paradigm of modernity/rationality”) and its politics of Eurocentric knowing since the European Renaissance (see part IV of this book) were effective hegemonic weapons of Westernization, the five-hundred-years-long foundation of what is today re-Westernization: the neoliberal designs (and desires) to homogenize the planet without sacrificing any of the modernity/rationality (rhetoric of modernity) paradigm. This paradigm was consolidated in and by disciplinary formations regulating and regulated by universities, museums, schools, convents, and monasteries. In the centuries since then it has been exported/imported to Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, local knowledges and ways of knowing have not been erased. Changing the content won’t do. Epistemic reconstitutions target the terms (assumptions, beliefs, principles) of the conversations that regulate the content. To do so, decolonial investigations are of paramount importance. They were simply devalued and forsaken (destituted) with all the painful consequences for the people whose languages, knowledge, and praxes of knowing and living were sidelined.

Coloniality of knowledge (one domain of CMP; see section III below) was and still is an instrumental part of the package of political, economic, and military Westernization. But today, coloniality of knowledge is being heavily contested by de-Westernization: China is being accused of “stealing” Western technology—both as *technics* and as instrument—when indeed China is

disputing the control and management of the CMP. However, coloniality of knowledge had and has a special Westernizing function: possession and dispossession of lands, for example, were not just acts of grabbing, dispossessing, and keeping silence. Possessions and dispossessions were legitimized through and by knowledge. Provisions of international law were created in the sixteenth century precisely to that end. For this reason, epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution are foundational decolonial tasks. Contesting the coloniality of established knowledge and the coloniality of power behind it requires changing the terms of the conversations in both spheres: the sphere of state-directed de-Westernization and the sphere of the political society's decolonial drive to reconstituting the communal. The politics of decolonial investigations in and beyond the academe is of the essence. Reconstituting the *communal* cannot be pursued, and even less achieved when taking for granted the assumptions and knowledges on which the current *social* has been structured.

At this point the distinction between the *particular meaning* of “decolonization” during the Cold War and of “decoloniality” after the Cold War becomes relevant. I emphasize “particular meaning” because it will be pertinent for the distinctions between decolonialization (i.e., establishing governance by the natives forming their own nation-states) and decoloniality (epistemic reconstitution) that I am about to outline. First, there are many local histories affected by the past five hundred years of Westernization, and therefore there are diverse decolonial responses to it (such as the Zapatistas or Feminismo Comunitario in Bolivia and Guatemala; the Peasant Way, Sovereignty of Food, and Idle No More in Canada; or Black Lives Matter in the US; etc.) as well as responses that do not claim to be decolonial yet direct their efforts toward overcoming coloniality and healing colonial wounds.¹⁴ Second, there are many ways of struggling and confronting the consequences of coloniality without explicitly embracing the presuppositions of the coloniality of power, of CMP, and of the decolonial energies that they provoke in their mutual configuration. To question and struggle against injustice doesn't require decoloniality. It can be pursued in several frames of knowing and being. It is in this respect that I have been arguing that decoloniality is an option; it's neither a mission of conversion nor a field of “disciplinary studies.” Delinking from the colonial matrix of power is not a question of content or a question of what we talk about: it is about the presuppositions and assumptions on which we ground our talking and doing; it is *about the terms of the conversations, not just the contents*. But what are the terms of the conversation? Decolonial delinking means delinking from the *enunciation* of the CMP, not just its content. Delinking from the enunciation means to delink from the coloniality of power's regulations of

ways of knowing and understanding. Opposing and being “critical” of the content without delinking from the enunciation keeps you trapped in the enunciation of the CMP (see section III below). What I mean is that undertaking decolonial investigations depends on the local histories and the context in which decolonial undertakings materialize. Decoloniality has particular meanings in Africa, among the First Nations of Canada, the Maori of New Zealand, and Indigenous populations in the Andes, among the Afro-Caribbean population in former Eastern Europe, among immigrants, or among LGBTQ populations in Europe, the US, or Indonesia. One global decolonial model cannot serve all local histories. However, what connects the diversity of local histories is the long-lasting and wide-ranging invasion of Westernization and the export/import of the European paradigm of knowledge and knowing. From the decolonial diversity of local histories around the globe, entangled with global designs, no local history can ever be enunciated as global, since every enunciation cannot be but local.¹⁵ The only local history that managed to become the headquarters of global designs was that of Western civilization.

I’ve already mentioned the distinctive features of decolonization during the Cold War, and decoloniality at the end of it and in the present, but they are important to be considered further. Decolonization during the Cold War was motivated by the need to expel the colonial settler from the colonized territory so that the native or Indigenous population could have its own governance, taking the form of the nation-state. The nation-state was created in Europe by the emerging ethno-class composed of merchant bourgeois and laborers (farmers, artisans, etc.—i.e., the Third Estate that confronted the First and the Second, the clergy and the aristocracy), who led the Glorious Revolution in England (1688) and the French Revolution (1789). This was the first radical transformation of the CMP since its foundation in the sixteenth century with the colonization of the Americas. We could call it the “second modern/colonial revolutions.” These revolutions inaugurated the groundwork for the modern nation-state to come into being and, with time, to take over the global order (now in dispute). Imported by liberated colonies, the model of the European nation-state resulted in the formation of modern/colonial nation-states in the former colonies, and in direct interdependency with their former colonists. Power differentials dividing the First, Second, and Third Worlds during the Cold War established exactly that order of priority: the Second and Third Worlds were subordinated to and dependent on the First World. The division was not ontic but epistemological—that is, it was invented in the First World, which posited itself as one component of the classification although it was the locus of enunciation that invented the clas-

sification. That is simply the power of coloniality of knowledge and the work of coloniality of power.

The inherited dependency in the formation of modern/colonial nation-states in the former colonies, not surprisingly, touches every area of experience, including and beyond governance, the financial and corporate sectors, and the public sphere. Dependence is political, economic, epistemological, and cultural—it touch the senses and emotions of people at both ends of the spectrum. You feel your dependence and it hurts: that is why you want to be in Paris, London, or New York instead of back home in the Third World or in some other newly emerging economy. And if you are driving the institutions that in those places make decisions for the rest of the world, you sense the superiority of your being; your senses are secured by the institutions that support you. Immersed in feelings of dependence, epistemological dependence manifests as the geopolitical “sense of inferiority” at one end of the spectrum and “sense of superiority” at the other. For officials of the nation-state formed after liberation, it manifested as the desire to become “like” the First World and its people, bypassing the fact that coloniality of power works, in different ways, at both ends of the spectrum: as the locus of exporting global designs and the locus of importing them. Into this sea of feelings, the entertainment industry and television have been powerful tools to project First World images and generate desires for emulation, resulting in the mixed atmosphere of modern/colonial states. The inclination toward decolonial liberation has persisted, while at the same time power differentials and codependent relations have made the horizon of liberation more distant. Not only have Western political theory and political economy remained in place in the newly formed nation-states; Western knowledge and schooling have joined forces with them, overshadowing long histories of local education in the former colonies too. Local knowledges were despised by both the exporter and the importer of the European paradigm of modernity/rationality. The restitution of disavowed local knowledge is an important aspect of decolonial projects of epistemic and ontological reconstitutions. Today, European and US universities have remained world attractions and promote symbols of knowledge as yet another Western commodity exported to the Middle East, Singapore, and China.¹⁶

However, powerful signs of reversing colonial destitutions were awakened during the Cold War that could not have been incorporated in the emerging modern/colonial states. Here, signs pointed in other directions, along with increasing attention to independent thought rather than to nation-states simply caught in the tentacles of modern thinking. State politics after decolonization

truly wanted to modernize. And that was the kiss of death for decolonization and a convenient dependency for the local political, financial, and corporate elites who were able to benefit from the newly created nation-states. There were signs of epistemic disobedience that could not be absorbed by modern/colonial nation-states' falling back into the fold of modernity, and, consequently, maintaining coloniality under the umbrella of decolonization. Epistemic disobedience under these conditions are the seeds of the variegated eruption of political societies. We find such signs in the great thinkers of the time, whether they were directly involved in the struggle to expel the imperial settlers (like Amílcar Cabral, Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah), participated as national foreigners in the liberation of another country (like Frantz Fanon in Algeria), fought national settlers (Steve Biko confronting the Afrikaans), or were simply "present" at a metropole (e.g., thinkers in Paris writing for *Présence Africaine*). All these intellectuals engaged in epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution in different ways, yet still confronted the dismissive power of Western epistemology (knowledge) and aesthesis (ways of being, sensing, and systems of belief).

These lines of thought unfolding in Africa were chronologically parallel to the dependency debates in South America, both in their intellectual genealogy that brought about the conceptual "coloniality of power" in the early 1990s and in giving a new meaning to decolonization: decolonization as epistemic reconstitution. For Quijano, from that moment on decolonial horizons were no longer defined by modern/colonial nation-states (see chapter 4). Decolonization required delinking (to extricate oneself) from the colonial matrix of power (the CMP) and engaging in the labor of epistemic and aesthetic reconstitutions. By the end of the Cold War, it was clear to Quijano that decolonization and the nation-state were not compatible—as incompatible indeed as democracy and capitalism. Quijano was not oblivious to the impact of the CMP in the daily lives of the people, in their/our beliefs and sensing emotions. And indeed we cannot detach Quijano's own sensing and emotioning from his powerful conceptual thinking and argument-making. He perceived and noted the equivalences of certain phenomena at the inception of CMP, in the sixteenth century and the last decades of the twentieth century and first decades of the twenty-first, intruding (shaping and forming) in "every aspect of social existence of people." That is, invading our subjectivities, making us subjected to the CMP. He wrote:

Desde la crisis mundial que comenzó a mediados de los 70s. se ha hecho visible un proceso que afecta a todos y a cada uno de los aspectos de la

existencia social de las gentes de todos los países. El mundo que se formó desde hace 500 años está culminando con la formación de una estructura productiva, financiera y comercial que es percibida como más integrada que antes porque su control ha sido reconcentrado bajo pocos y reducidos grupos. . . . Por eso mismo, no es difícil admitir que ha producido una profunda y masiva modificación de la vida de todas las sociedades y de todas las gentes. Se trata de una real mutación, no sólo de cambios dentro de una continuidad.¹⁷

Since the world crisis that began in the mid-1970s, a process that affects each and every aspect of the social existence of the people of all countries has become visible. The world that was formed five hundred years ago is culminating in the formation of a productive, financial, and commercial structure that is perceived as more integrated than before because its control has been concentrated under a few and small groups. . . . For that very reason, it is not difficult to admit that it has produced a profound and massive modification in the life of all societies and of all peoples. It is a real mutation, not just changes within a continuity.

At the present time equivalent phenomena occur. Following up on Quijano's coloniality of power, which implies coloniality of knowledge and of being in the world, I posit that the basic tasks of decoloniality are to delink from the CMP and to engage in epistemic (knowing) and aesthetic (sensing, being) reconstitutions. Decoloniality of knowing and sensing are two anchors of any project to reexist—to liberate ourselves, our subjectivity from the tentacles of the CMP. The world cannot be changed if the people who inhabit and make it do not change. The goals of decolonial investigations are nothing else than knowing and understanding how the CMP manages all of us without our knowing it to illuminate the paths toward our envisioned self (to borrow Steve Biko's decolonial vision).

To take into account additional factors relevant to the distinction between decolonization and decoloniality in interstate relations, we have to go back to the Cold War. The Bandung Conference (1955) was and still is a marker of decolonization and a point of reference for three ensuing outcomes (chapter 9)—one explicit, the second implicit, and the third indirect. The explicit outcome was the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, which like Bandung was a state-led project. The leading figures of this organization were Yugoslavia's Marshal Josip Broz Tito (who was not invited to the Bandung Conference), India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sukarno from Indonesia, and Kwame Nkrumah from Ghana. These were the NAM's five

founding fathers. Though the NAM stripped away the decolonial elements of race and religion fundamental at Bandung, it also called neither the nation-state nor capitalist economies into question. The nation-state was assumed to be the “natural” structure of governance and capitalism the “natural” type of economy, as long as both were managed by natives of the land rather than by foreign settlers. The NAM is still operative, but the conditions it addresses have changed radically since the Cold War. The goal was no longer decolonization but socialism, distinguished from Soviet and Chinese communism. The NAM today has been sidelined by the advent of a world order in which capitalism is the common ground and the political conflicts surface when calling the shots is in question. The United Nations Security Council has been in the past decades a thermometer of the dispute for the control and management of the CMP. States that during the Cold War were under the influence of either the Soviet Union or the United States (i.e., either communist or capitalist) are now caught in the conflict between de-Westernization and re-Westernization, both driven by a capitalist-oriented economy.

This outcome grew from the seeds of de-Westernization—and in this regard the Bandung Conference was as much an explicit effort to promote decolonization as it was an implicit state-led attempt at de-Westernization. At that moment both directions were undistinguishable. It was then a different world order dominated by the interstate conflict between liberal capitalism and state communism. What shall be remembered is that Bandung as a state-led—*qua* state—project was not conducive to decolonization. But that became clear later. What do I mean by this? In 1955 no decolonial thinker or state leader foresaw that the prevailing nation-state was incompatible with decolonization. Why? For the simple reason that the nation-state was the modern/colonial institution of governance par excellence, and no decolonial thinker (except Gandhi and Fanon) at that point could foresee that Bandung would, for instance, seed the rising of Singapore in the 1960s and of China in the 1980s. Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew was only five years younger than Nasher, for example, but unlike Nasher, who led the overthrow of Egypt’s monarchy in 1952 and was the country’s second president in 1954, Yew became the first prime minister of Singapore, its “founding father,” in 1959, four years after the conference. Yew, age thirty-two in 1955, was also quite younger than Nehru (born in 1899), who became prime minister of India in 1947. It would have been clear to Yew that the path of liberation from Westernization was through capitalism. That is the spirit of de-Westernization and was also the meaning of Bandung.

Although he was not in a position to be invited, a political figure like young Lee Kuan Yew would have been well acquainted with the Bandung

Conference, which took place just next door in neighboring Indonesia. His political analysis of international relations, his sensibility to manage public relations, and his vision for Singapore are indications of his de-Westernizing political thinking through capitalism, as was his understanding that sovereignty could be attained only by embracing and appropriating a financial capitalism rather than fighting it.¹⁸ The point I am driving at is that de-Westernization uncoupled capitalism from liberalism and neoliberalism and usurped it to advance de-Western liberation. It is well known, and Kuan Yew himself reports, that the conversations he had with Deng Xiaoping after Mao Zedong's death contributed to China's shift from socialism to "market Leninism."¹⁹ Refusing to be "developed" by others following the Western models of modernization and development, Deng Xiaoping delinked (as Kuan Yew had already done) from Western dictates, guidelines, and hope. Deng Xiaoping appropriated the rules of economic accumulation and growth (capitalism) and rejected liberalism instead of confronting it as Mao Zedong had done. The end result was uncoupling capitalism from liberalism (and later on neoliberalism) to manage the economy in China's own way. "Capitalism with Chinese characteristics" was a sarcastic comment in Western media. And indeed it was and it is. And one could ask: what is wrong about that? That is what de-Westernization means in the history of the CMP and it explains a good deal of the conflicts and the hybrid warfare between the US and China, as well as the US's numerous conflicts with Russia and Iran.²⁰ De-Westernization has contributed to ending the cycle of Westernization and Western hegemony, forcing a reorientation of US foreign policy from Westernization to re-Westernization, initiated first by Barack Obama's globalism and later by Donald Trump's nationalism.

The above are inferences derived from the history of the colonial matrix of power (CMP), not from world history or the history of Western civilization or any other relevant imperial narrative of historical "facts" as they are ordinarily taught in secondary schools and the university. The history of the CMP is the narrative of the creation of a matrix of domination propelled by the coloniality of power, which, as I suggested earlier, in a pedagogical mode, is analogous to the unconscious of psychoanalysis. And it could be seen also as the *technics* of domination, rather than survival, building on Spengler's non-instrumental concept of technics. The coloniality of power—as I've already suggested—is the unconscious of Western civilization and the CMP its instrumentalization. And let's remember that the coloniality of power we are talking about is not a feature of "human nature" but is a reorientation of the *tactics of living for domination* that surfaced in the sixteenth century with the possibilities opened up to European monarchs, clergy, adventurers, and businessmen in the

triangulation of the Atlantic: New World lands, African enslaved labor, and European global designs.

What coloniality of power has created, the mechanism of its enforcement (the instrument), is the CMP, and the history of the CMP is the history of an underlying structure of the world order, managed and controlled by North Atlantic imperial states from 1500 to 2000 (Westernization) until its management began to be disputed by the rise of de-Westernization and the making of a multipolar world order. What I am saying is the result of decolonial analytics grounded in the coloniality of power and the history of the CMP. From a decolonial perspective, this history—from the sixteenth century to today—illuminates the mutations arising from seventy years of struggle between two poles of Western civilization, liberalism and socialism/communism. Standing in confrontation with and delinking from this history is the multipolar world order prompted by de-Westernization and the disputes centered on the control and management of the CMP. The three diverse pillars of de-Westernization today are, first, China, Russia, and Iran; second, the ambiguous foreign policies of India and Turkey, which are still playing their game between de- and re-Westernization; and third, the ever-changing heads of state in Latin America. Once Lula da Silva, Hugo Chávez, Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Evo Morales, and Rafael Correa were gone, Latin American governance turned from its de-Western orientation to rejoin the path toward re-Westernization. Re-Westernization has resorted to sanctions while supporting “democratic” protests against disobedient states (Hong Kong, Iran, Russia), yet it remains mute when protesters rise against re-Westernizing states such as the massive protests in Chile before COVID-19 and the quiet support of the coup-d'état destituting the democratically elected Evo Morales from the presidency. The point these examples illuminate is the double standards driving, on the one hand, the rhetoric of modernity while, on the other, implementing the logic of coloniality.

An additional outcome to emerge from the Bandung Conference, by indirection, was the mutation of decolonization into decoloniality in the early 1990s, by which I mean that decoloniality after Quijano and seen through his perspective can neither be a state-led project nor be associated with nation-states. The most that a state dissenting from the West can do is to embrace a politics of de-Westernization and join China, Russia, and Iran rather than the US/UK and the European Union. The Bandung Conference was, no doubt, a marker of decolonization, and it remains in the genealogy of decoloniality, as I will describe in more detail later. It belongs there due to two radical elements Sukarno introduced into political theory that deviate or delink from Western

political theory as it evolved from Plato and Aristotle to Karl Marx and Carl Schmitt. These two missing elements are race and religion.²¹ In his inaugural speech, Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia (and a figure comparable to Amílcar Cabral, Patrice Lumumba, or Kwame Nkrumah) stated forcefully that the conference he convoked was the first intercontinental conference of “colored people.” And he followed up by mentioning that the invitees were affiliated with many different religions: Islamism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism. He did not mention Christianity and Judaism. This was the component of Bandung, missing in the NAM, that connects with decolonial thinking during the Cold War, in spite of and parallel to the politics of nation-state formation that I mentioned above.

While decoloniality has common features with de-Westernization, their goals are widely divergent. What decoloniality and de-Westernization share is the need to delink. De-Westernization seeks to delink from the political and economic dictates of Western institutions in order to dispute the control and management by the CMP, while decoloniality aims to delink from the CMP (see section III.3). De-Westernization needs strong states to prevent further disruptions by Western intrusion, while decoloniality turns its back to the state and reorients its task by delinking from the CMP and rebuilding communal relations in spite of social structures. Last but not least, de-Westernization is a concept incorporated into *decolonial analytics* of the world order, while decoloniality names a particular project of *decolonial liberation* by the epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution in which this book is inscribed.

II Signposts in the Formation of the Modern/Colonial World Order

The politics of decolonial investigations I pursue in this volume are framed, first, by the historical formation, transformation, and management of the CMP from 1500 to 2000, the period coinciding with the Westernization of the planet; second, by the dispute over the past two decades for the control and management of the CMP (de-Westernization); and third, by the decolonial political, epistemic, and ethical orientation to delink from both. Re-Westernization is the adjustment made by the North Atlantic states (the US, UK, and EU) to maintain the hegemony and the privileges of a unilateral world order they are in danger of losing and desperately trying to maintain. The coexistence of these three forces explains to a great extent the global disorder that all of us on the planet are experiencing. Pandemics and global warming are of secondary relevance in the dispute to maintain unipolarity, on the one hand, and to uncouple

from it and create a multipolar world order on the other. Just as the five hundred years of the formation and transformation of the CMP mark the period of Westernization of the planet, so also are Westernization and Western civilization two facets of the same period, two faces of the same phenomenon: Western civilization came into being in the European Renaissance (1300–1600 are the standard dates), and it was consolidated with the advent of the coloniality of power that propelled European expansion (Westernization) after 1500. The coloniality of power (the technics) and CMP (the instrument), I argue, constitute the underlying structure of Western civilization and Westernization, two different but entangled trajectories. The first concerns the history of Europe (and more recently of the US); the second concerns the rest of the world. The concept of coloniality could have hardly appeared in Europe: Europeans see and sense modernity; the rest of the world senses and sees coloniality.

The so-called discovery and conquest of America was quickly deemed a crucial event in the history of humankind. By 1550 the Spaniard Francisco López de Gómara believed that this was the most momentous event since the creation of the world. By 1776, the Scottish philosopher and moralist Adam Smith had made a similar statement, most likely not knowing de Gómara's dictum. And in the middle of the nineteenth century, Karl Marx—knowing Smith but most likely not de Gómara—also made a similar statement. More specifically, de Gómara wrote the following in the dedication of his book, *Historia General de las Indias* (1553), to Charles I, king of Spain (1500–1558): “The most important event after the creation of the world, with the exception of the reincarnation and death of its Creator, was the discovery of the Indies. God wanted the discovery of the Indies to take place during your time and *for your vassals, so they could be converted to your sacred law*. . . . The conquest of the Indians began just after the expulsion of the Moors, so Spaniards are always at war about the infidels.”²²

Notice the assumptions that the “Indians” were vassals of the king and that they were destined to be converted to “your sacred law,” which is the first epistemic destitution in this paragraph. The second one appears right after: the expulsion of the Moors, who are labeled “infidels.” Their knowing, knowledge, beliefs, and praxes of living are invalidated and nullified. They, the infidels, are a “problem” that requires war to keep them at bay or to destroy them if they cannot be controlled. The naturalization of this nullification is one of the pillars of Western universalism: the “problem” is displaced onto the other when in fact it is the ostracizing Spanish who have the “problem” with their invented other. Constitution and destitution are two simultaneous epistemic procedures, and it is in this double movement that

what I term “colonial” and “imperial” differences are created. The first impacts decoloniality, the second de-Westernization, although there is not a sharp division between them. Racism is an overlapping zone that encroaches on both. We will see the nature and impact of these two types of differences later in this book (chapters 8, 9, 10). For now, it is enough to note that in the period preceding the “discovery” of “the Indies,” the Umayyad Caliphate, the Emirate of Córdoba, and the Emirate of Granada were in control of the Iberian Peninsula and had been controlling it for seven centuries (see map in chapter 1). The reconquest of the peninsula by the Spanish coincided with the beginning of Spain’s New World conquest. We will see how what I call the “imperial difference” was then projected onto “enemies” who were not or could not be dominated. Once an imperial difference was constituted and projected toward such people, it remained in place from the sixteenth century to today. Eventually, after the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula, the imperial difference was bestowed on the Ottoman sultanate, and has more recently been projected onto Russia, China, and Iran (heir of the Muslim Safavid sultanate).

Significantly, Adam Smith (later recognized as the founder of political economy) issued a statement very similar to de Gómar’s: “The discovery of America, and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind. Their consequences have been very great; but in the short period of between two and three centuries which has elapsed since these discoveries were made, it is impossible that the whole extent of their consequences can have been seen. What benefits, or misfortunes to mankind may hereafter result from those great events, no human wisdom can foresee.”²³

Smith’s observations make necessary a few reminders about “discoveries” in view of the argument I make in this book. The Cape of Good Hope was “discovered” by the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias in 1488. He named it “Cabo das Tormentas” (Cape of Storms) four years before Columbus landed among unknown islands he thought were the Asian Indies, which were later named by Europeans the “Indias Orientales.” The word “discover” goes in quotation marks because, of course, the New World and the Cape of Good Hope were known by the people inhabiting the areas. Naming the Cape of Storms, the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, as they have done before by naming the New World, Indias Occidentales, and finally America, a continent that Europeans did not know, accomplished a double destitution of the frameworks of knowledge and spatial reference: one was the erasures of the names that Andean and Mesoamerican civilizations, as well as myriad other existing cultures, gave to

their territory and the physical and semantic appropriation of places, locating them in the European consciousness, and the other was the self-affirmation of European legal and economic rights to use and administer them according to their convenience.

This action simultaneously accomplished the invalidation and nullification of the original names and meaning that these places had had for the people who for centuries had inhabited what for Europeans was a New World, and the North Atlantic universals were in the making, in the origins of comparative ethnology, cartography, and international law. Beyond appropriating the planet legally, militarily, and economically, Europeans possessed the world epistemically: *epistemic constitution was simultaneous with epistemic destitutions*, and both provoked the need of *epistemic and aesthetic reconstitutions*, which we will see in more detail in section III, below. In other words, the simultaneous and heterogenous field of forces of modernity/coloniality, that is, constitution/ destitution, were here at work. In section III.3 we will see the emergence of *de-colonial reconstitutions*. But for the time being I am limiting myself to the work of the coloniality of power and the formation of the CMP. Since modernity/ coloniality work through the coloniality of knowing and being, of epistemology and aesthetics (aesthetics is a modern concept, aesthesis a decolonial one), the reconstitution of both calls for the politics of decolonial investigations bringing back gnoseology (the conditions of all knowing, not only disciplinary) to denaturalize epistemology, and aesthesis (sensing, being in the world) to denaturalize aesthetics (the beautiful, sublime, a work of art). Healing colonial wounds and reducing Western modernity to its own size is a foremost political task of decolonial investigations and liberation.²⁴

Hence, I propose modernity/coloniality/decoloniality as a complex concept that could be rendered in Aníbal Quijano's vocabulary as heterogeneous historic-structural nodes. This is also a decolonial concept that does away with the unilinear historical time of the North Atlantic universals. Historic-structural heterogeneities are temporal/spatial nodes in motion (e.g., the knotted experience of chronology and geography, of global designs and people's desires and fears, their/our sensing and emotioning, and the constant flows *in* space and time) constituted in the process of the Western epistemic designs and appropriations of planetary histories and locations and the variegated local responses to them. They disturb modes of knowing, being, sensibility (aesthesis), and belief of places and people invaded by imperial settlers, and this disturbance creates colonial wounds that turn into physical and emotional disequilibrium caused by humiliation and dehumanization, which are beyond (although emotionally related to) the aggressions of genocide, rape,

and other forms of physical viciousness. For the survivors, healing colonial wounds requires regaining destituted dignity and restoring respect for people's own gnoseological and aesthetic principles of knowing, knowledge, and ways of being. Our decolonial work of reconstituting what has been destituted in the name of modernity, progress, civilization, development, and democracy is an unavoidable "remedy" to heal colonial wounds. And this is a distinctive trajectory of decoloniality today (see chapter 14).²⁵

Another point that deserves attention in Smith's statement is that while he recognized the two events mentioned as the most significant in the history of mankind, he did not need the caveat "with the exception of the reincarnation and death of its Creator." Moreover, while noting the indisputable significance of these events, he was cautious about their consequences, "which no human wisdom can foresee." Today, five hundred years after the first statement and three hundred after the second one, we are experiencing their consequences globally. Interpretations vary, but decolonially speaking, the consequences Smith intuited could be seen either to consolidate modernity or to intensify coloniality, though today the issue is no longer either/or but both/and. There are *contributions* that modernity made to the history of the human species that cannot be denied, although the *benefits* of modernity for a quantitative minority of people, the growing inequality, and the increasingly destituted population is the aberration that has to be denied. Both phenomena occur simultaneously and are co-constitutive. Poverty cannot be corrected, let alone erased, as long as the economy of accumulation carries the day. Constitution/destitution, modernity/coloniality are the movers of the coloniality of power and the engine of the CMP.

About a hundred years after Smith, Karl Marx was not indifferent to what in the previous century were labeled the most significant events in the history of mankind. Marx was certainly familiar with Smith, though I doubt (as I already mentioned) he was familiar with de Gómara. In any event, Marx was not impressed by the significance of the "discovery" of America in the history of mankind but in the history of capitalism:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of *blackskins* are things which characterize the dawn of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation.

The different moments of primitive accumulation can be assigned in particular to Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England in more or less chronological order. These different moments are systematically combined together at the end of the seventeenth century in England; the combination embraces the colonies, the national debt, the modern tax system, and the system of protecting. These methods depend in part on brute force, for instance the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten as in a hot-house, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition.²⁶

Marx's narrative is told top-down. He was already witnessing the Industrial Revolution and the role of England in concert with western European imperial states, enumerated at the beginning of the first paragraph. And because he was conceptualizing and analyzing capital through the experience of the Industrial Revolution in England, he conceived the sixteenth-century economy opened up by the commercial circuits of the Atlantic as "primitive," sometimes "original," accumulation. "Primitive" was introduced in the eighteenth century and was a mutation of "barbarian located in space" into "primitives in time," the origin of the human species that "evolved" to civilization.²⁷ "Original" is a theological concept borrowed from "original sin." In any case, the route from primitive accumulation to the formation of capital reveals a unilineal historical time, and the destitution of geopolitical spaces, in which Marx was conceiving the history of capital(ism). I will come back to this issue shortly, but before I do, I need to consider a second observation of Marx's paragraphs.

England at that time came to be, for Marx, the culmination of the combined colonial impact of all previous European colonialism—"Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England in more or less chronological order" (see Ottobah Cugoano's perception, below, of the combined forces of European colonialism). Chronology is the narrative logic here: the last in the sequence supersedes all previous contributions of Spain, Portugal, Holland, and France. For Quijano this would be a heterogeneous historic-structural node, a complex of diachronic and synchronic accumulation. Furthermore, the sequence exemplifies a further distinction I explore in part III of this book. Just as it is important to grasp *colonial and imperial* differences, so also should be understood that there are two types of imperial difference. One establishes the distinction within Europe itself: the *intramural imperial difference* from the North to the more inferior "South." The other establishes the distinction between Europe and coexisting strong governance: the *extramural imperial differences* pro-

jected onto the Umayyad Caliphate, the Ottoman sultanate before the making of southern Europe, and, more recently onto Russia/Soviet Union/Russian Federation, China, and Iran (heir to the Safavid sultanate).

It should be remembered that race and racism are fundamental factors driving the coloniality of power.²⁸ However, if we shift the geography of knowing, sensing, and believing and look instead at the Industrial Revolution from the lived experience in and of the Americas since the sixteenth century, we will form a different picture. Marx was looking *backward* from the nineteenth century and from Europe. Quijano was looking *forward* and sideways from the sixteenth century (heterogeneous historic-structural nodes) and from the Americas to the world. Here is what he perceived and described in an article he coauthored with Immanuel Wallerstein: “The modern world-system was born in the long sixteenth century. The Americas as a geosocial construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of this geosocial entity, the Americas, was the *constitutive* act of the modern world-system. The Americas were not incorporated into an already existing capitalist world economy. There could not have been a capitalist world economy without the Americas” (emphasis added).²⁹

In the same year as the excerpt above appeared, Quijano published in Peru (and in Spanish) his celebrated “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” turning his attention from the economy to knowledge and underscoring the economy as a question of knowledge, or better yet, of knowledge legitimizing the material pursuit of wealth with all its sociological, psychological, and historical consequences. Coloniality of power is the epistemic driver of politics and ethics in all areas of experience (sensing, emotioning, being) through both the economy and knowledge/understanding (i.e., the rhetoric of modernity):

In the beginning colonialism was a product of a systematic repression, not only of the specific beliefs, ideas, images, symbols or knowledge that were not useful to global colonial domination, while at the same time the colonizers were expropriating from the colonized their knowledge, especially in mining, agriculture, engineering, as well as their products and work. The repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivized expression, intellectual or visual. It was followed by the imposition of the use of the rulers’ own patterns of expression, and of their beliefs and images with reference to the supernatural. These beliefs and images served not only to impede the cultural production of the dominated, but also as a very efficient means of social

and cultural control, when the immediate repression ceased to be constant and systematic.³⁰

Quijano's shift to knowledge as the dominant factor of the colonial matrix of power (CMP) was the preliminary step to shifting the meaning that decolonization had during the Cold War (i.e., the foundations of the native population's own nation-state). In South and Central America, and particularly in Spanish America, the ending of Spanish colonialism began in the first half of the nineteenth century, and in Brazil at the end of the same century. By 1990 it was obvious to Quijano that decolonization could not be achieved, not even advanced, by the modern, secular, and bourgeois nation-state, because the nation-state is fundamentally a tool of the CMP for the control of governance in both domestic national territories and in the interstate global system.³¹ The formation of the nation-state in Europe, later exported/imported beyond Europe, was an instrument to lay waste to other forms of governance. Currently, the rhetoric of spreading democracy and human rights through the formation of Western-style nation-states has become an explicit tool—especially of the US—to legitimize interstate humanistic interventions. Hence, Quijano envisioned that an epistemological reconstitution (and the consequent restitution of sensing, being, and emotioning disqualified by the politics of Eurocentric knowing) had to be the fundamental decolonial task since, in his argument (which I incorporate in this book), the control of knowledge and the regulation of ways of knowing and being control the subjectivities of both governing actors (political, economic, epistemic, artistic, religious) and governed actors. White supremacy is nothing but a consequence of the coloniality of power in the sensing and emotioning of actors in ruling positions.

Here is one more vignette to illustrate the formation of the North Atlantic and the impact of the Western totality of knowledge. This time the protagonist is Sigmund Freud, writing about seventy years after Marx. Freud noticed the relevance of the two previously discussed events underscored by de Gómara, Smith, and Marx, but he saw them in relation to the “malaise of civilization.” Obviously, he was not talking or thinking about Chinese, Islamic, Incan, or Persian civilizations but of Western civilization: his unconscious assumption of the universal totality of knowledge. Yet by the time Freud was writing his well-known essay *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), the “decline of the West” was already an issue debated by European intelligentsia.³² Taking into account the existing discontent with civilization, he asked himself what “may have happened that so many people have come to take up this strange attitude of hostility to civilization.” These reflections evolved around Freud's concern

with the conditions of happiness, as they confronted a generalized feeling among the European middle class. Freud observed that what “we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be happier if we gave it up and returned to the primitive conditions.” Asking himself how humans had arrived at this situation, Freud speculates, “I think I know what the last and the last but one of those occasions were. I am not learned enough to trace the chain of them far back in the history of the human species, but a factor of this kind of hostility to civilization must already have been at work in the victory of Christendom over the heathen religions. For it was very closely related to the low estimation put upon earthly life by the Christian doctrine.”

After preparing the terrain, Freud makes his point:

The last but one of these occasions was when the progress of voyages of discovery led to contact with *primitive* peoples and races. In consequence of insufficient observation and a mistaken view of their manners and customs, they appeared to Europeans to be leading a simple, happy life with few wants, a life such as was unattainable by their visitors with their superior civilization. Later experience has corrected some of those judgements. . . . The last occasion is especially familiar to us. It arose when people came to know about the mechanism of neurosis, which threatens to undermine the modicum of happiness enjoyed by civilized men. . . . A person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals. . . . The abolition or reduction of those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness. (Emphasis added.)³³

In his efforts to understand the discontents that civilization has generated, he moves into a consideration of humans’ power over nature and technology. Notice that he is writing about a decade before cybernetics would revolutionize technologies by introducing “thinking machines”—the technological automation of the Industrial Revolution that Charles Chaplin has rendered unforgettable in *Modern Times* (1936), made six years after Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Freud observes that the “newly won power over space and time, this subjugation of the forces of nature, *which is a longing that goes back thousands of years*, has not increased the amount of pleasurable satisfaction which they may expect from life and has not made them happier” (emphasis added).

Freud’s concern about the negative effect that civilization has on happiness calls for clarification. The first is to question the assumption that the “pursuit of happiness” (which to this day has increasingly been attached to having

more) is a universal, not regional, obsession in a civilization that has made of the individual (individual pleasure and the pursuit of happiness) the fundamental meaning of life. Shall this be the only one for all, or just for Western civilization? (See chapter 14.) Concurrently, the second clarification queries the assumption that for thousands of years mankind was longing to “subjugate the forces of nature.” Two counterexamples should suffice to cast some doubt on these assumptions. But notice that both assumptions, the pursuit of happiness and the longing to subjugate the forces of nature, are already constitutive of the *Western civilization*, which Freud renders simply as “civilization” as if it were the only (universal) one or that members of any other civilization would have set for themselves the same principles and goals.

The first counterexample questions Freud’s taking for granted that the “pursuit of happiness” is the horizon of all mankind (another assumption of the universal totality of knowledge), and in so doing he preempted asking questions about his assumption, forestalling not only other possibilities but also other circumstances in which different pursuits would have been the main concern of non-Western civilizations. Freud was far removed in space, time, and frame of mind from the world and philosophy of Náhuatl-speaking people in ancient Mexico, also known as the Aztec civilization. Happiness was not the main concern in Náhuatl philosophy, if it was a concern at all. The main concern for them was “rootedness,” in which humans valued both “truth” and “good life” (not to be confused with the capitalist “better life”; see chapter 14) in the sense of how life should be lived according to their philosophy. Their image of existence was that we, humans, live on a slippery earth. By this they meant that living well and maintaining one’s balance and equilibrium is what should guide people’s vision, emotioning, and behavior. Hence, “rootedness” could be translated as “truth” as well as “grounded life,” for they are synonymous in Náhuatl philosophy. In that philosophy the horizon of life was not to be happy (whatever happiness may have meant for the Náhuatl); rootedness, balance, and equilibrium were their horizon and praxis of living.

Nahua tlamatinime [man of wisdom] conceived the *raison d’être* of philosophy in terms of this situation [that we live on a slippery earth], and turned to philosophy for practicable answers to what they regarded as the defining question of human existence: How can humans maintain their balance upon the slippery earth? This situation and question jointly constitute the problematic which functions as the defining framework for Nahua philosophy. Morally, epistemologically, and aesthetically appropriate human activity are defined in terms of the goal of humans main-

taining their balance upon the slippery earth. All human activities are to be directed towards this aim. At bottom, Nahua philosophy is essentially pragmatic.³⁴

The “pursuit of happiness” is a Western obsession connected to the Western glorification of the individual (see my previous observations on “trauma”) and of material possessions, which also explains the social burdens, demands, and expectations that engender neurosis and create the conditions for its “remedy,” in this case the psychoanalytic cure, which brings us to the second observation. Let me add more about Náhuatl philosophy and the meaning of life: the search of rootedness and balance on the slippery Earth:

The word the Aztecs used is *neltiliztli*. It literally means “rootedness,” but also “truth” and “goodness” more broadly. They believed that the true life was the good one, the highest humans could aim for in our deliberate actions. This resonates with the views of their classical “Western” counterparts, but diverges on two other fronts. First, the Aztecs held that this sort of life would not lead to “happiness,” except by luck. Second, the rooted life had to be achieved at four separate levels, a more encompassing method than that of the Greeks.³⁵

By the time Freud was writing, the *constitution* of Western civilization had *destituted* Aztec civilization four hundred years before. That is how the rhetoric of modernity works (constitution) and how it hides and disqualifies what is on its way forward (destitution).

The second counterexample I offer here calls into question “the mechanism of neurosis,” which results from the amount of frustration society imposes on individuals. Needless to say, the individuals in question are most likely middle-class western Europeans. At the time Freud was writing these essays, millions of people around the world had been destabilized by European invasions, projecting racism and inflicting colonial wounds. Psychoanalysis came into being precisely to deal with the destabilized members of the western European middle class, due, as Freud knew well, to the imposition that society enforces “in the service of cultural ideals.”

Decolonially speaking, the phenomenon described here is a manifestation of the rhetoric of modernity (cultural ideals and promises of progress, change, and happiness) that are imposed not by force but by creating desires that cannot be satisfied by the majority of the population. Generating desires is what counts, and for that the rhetoric of modernity is an essential tool of the CMP. The rhetoric of modernity goes hand in hand with the logic of coloniality:

happiness (rhetoric of modernity) is the reverse face of frustrations and neuroses (logic of coloniality). Outside Europe, in Asia, Africa, South/Central America, and the Caribbean, colonial wounds were inflicted in the colonized not by unsatisfied desires of the modern middle class but by the relentless work of humiliation and dehumanization (e.g., by racialization and racialized sexualities) of the majority of the non-European population. In psychoanalysis, the analytic cure deals with neurosis. Colonial wounds could hardly be “cured” by psychoanalysis, as Fanon clearly witnessed in Algeria. Colonial wounds had to be *healed* (not cured) by the wounded herself/himself in communal work, not in isolation. And here is where epistemic and aesthetic reconstitutions come to the foreground. These wounds are mended only by decolonial healings, which are communal endeavors initiated and joined by persons affected by colonial wounds. One case in point, among many, is Lorena Cabnal, a communal feminist Maya-Xinca from Guatemala:

El objetivo político de la Red de Sanadoras es partir de nuestro abordaje ancestral cosmogónico y feminista comunitario territorial para colaborar en la *recuperación emocional, física y espiritual* de las mujeres indígenas defensoras de la vida en las comunidades, quienes actualmente sufren los efectos de múltiples opresiones sobre su cuerpo. (Emphasis added.)³⁶

The political objective of the Network of [female] Healers is to start from our ancestral cosmogony and territorial communitarian feminism, to collaborate in the *emotional, physical and spiritual recovery* of indigenous women defenders of life in the communities, who currently suffer the effects of multiple oppressions on their bodies.

“Emotional, physical and spiritual recovery” requires epistemic and aesthetic reconstitutions, and these goals cannot be achieved within the epistemology and subjectivities of the actors and institutions running the CMP, who operate by means of the double movement of constitution/destitution. Global health is a case in point. Physical and spiritual recovery from the self-constitution of a so-called “global health design” that legitimizes the destitution of ancestral praxes of living and knowing requires healing the colonial wounds that global designs has caused, and this healing can only be achieved by reconstituting acts of knowing and sensing/emotioning, that is, by epistemic/aesthetic reconstitutions. For Indigenous people, the reconstitution of the communal means a constant recalling of ancestral cosmogony and territorial spirituality destituted by Christianity and by dispossession of land and exploitation of Indigenous labor. “Communal” and “communitarian,” in In-

digenous praxes of living and thinking, mean common union with the living cosmos, not limited to the human community. The *social-human* of Western civilization destituted the *communal-cosmic*. Without epistemic/aesthetic reconstitutions there cannot be restitution in the search for balance and harmony as the horizon of communal life. Put another way, the reconstitution of knowing (gnoseology), sensing, and emotioning (aesthesis) by Indigenous people themselves (“cosmic” in Cabnal’s vocabulary) reestablishes the priority of the communal over the glorification of the individual, and the *society* of individuals separated from the living cosmos (nature) and enclosed in their own ego.

Neurosis is not of necessity a problem for Indigenous females, at least as far as taking their destiny into their own hands is concerned. Psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts are not needed. The cosmo-political healing of colonial wounds (as Cabnal articulates it) is not quite the same as dealing with and curing a trauma. When I say—as I often do—that psychoanalysis is irrelevant to healing colonial wounds, I am not making a critique of Freud and psychoanalysis. I am underscoring the consequences of assuming universal totality of knowledge, which is the politics of Eurocentric knowing. I am saying only that in many contexts psychoanalysis is out of place because the “individual” is not the center and the communal is not the Western social. When Fanon perceived the limits of psychoanalysis for the Berber and Arab population (probably not for the *pied noir*), he was well acquainted—as a psychologist—with psychoanalysis, and he embodied the colonial wound of his own Black Caribbean experience in France. Psychoanalysis was born to deal with issues of an increasingly industrial and capitalist Europe at the end of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries. When it was reincarnated in the 1960s in Paris, the civilizational discontent that Freud perceived in the 1930s was the same in kind: the frustration that society imposes on individuals. But there was an added element: racism, which could have been in Freud, but he did not thematize it as Fanon did. Even later, following the sophisticated psychoanalytic recasting of Freud by the French psychoanalyst and philosopher Jacques Lacan, the socioeconomic conditions that provoked destabilization and frustration did not change. And if Lacan was aware of racism, it was not a significant element in his psychoanalytic theory. In that regard, there is a function for, indeed a need for, psychoanalysis in the large sector of the world’s population trapped in the *interiority* of Western civilization, as Freud perceived early on. And that explains why in Buenos Aires, a society of European immigrants mainly, psychoanalysis found a home. For other sectors of the population, such as Indigenous men and women, *neither neurosis nor other mental*

trauma was their problem, though long-lasting colonial wounds, inflicted by racial and sexual dehumanization, pushed the population of European descent in the colonies into the disorders Freud was observing in the European middle class. In many places in South America psychoanalysis is limited to a small portion of the Eurocentered population. Even the middle class at large prefers “*curanderas* and *curanderos*” (healers) who know how to deal with colonial wounds. Trauma names psychological disorders of the European bourgeoisie; colonial wounds name the humiliation and dehumanization of people around the world, of women and men mainly of color but not only.

I close here the four historical sketches that illustrate the constitutive rhetoric of modernity, the underlying assumptions that guide the narratives (celebratory and critical) of Western civilization in its constitution, simultaneous with intended and nonintended consequences: destitutions effected by the logic of coloniality. I move now to the conceptual structure of the CMP. At this point we—you, reader, and myself—are plunged and plunging into the conceptual apparatus of the politics of decolonial investigations.

III The Constitution of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Domains, Levels, and Flows

III.1 Constitution

The time has arrived to take a closer look at the colonial matrix of power (CMP).³⁷ Coloniality and the coloniality of power can for convenience be thought of as shorthand for a grid of complex and diffuse fields of forces that Quijano described as “*patrón colonial de poder*” and I translated into English as the “colonial matrix of power.”³⁸ It should be remembered that *since 1500, the singular feature of the coloniality of power is the driving energy in building, maintaining, transforming, and managing the CMP*. The question here is “power.” In that regard, Quijano writes:

Tal como lo conocemos históricamente, *el poder es un espacio y una malla de relaciones sociales* de explotación/dominación/conflicto articuladas, básicamente, en función y en torno de la disputa por el control de los siguientes ámbitos de existencia social: 1) el trabajo y sus productos; 2) en dependencia del anterior, la “naturaleza” y sus recursos de producción; 3) el sexo, sus productos y la reproducción de la especie; 4) la subjetividad y sus productos materiales e intersubjetivos, incluido el conocimiento; 5) la autoridad y sus instrumentos, de coerción en particular, para asegurar la reproducción de ese patrón de relaciones sociales y regular sus cambios. (Emphasis added.)³⁹

As we know it historically, *power is a space and a mesh of social relations* of exploitation/ domination/ conflict articulated, basically, on and around the dispute over the control of the following areas of social existence: (1) work and its products; (2) depending on the foregoing, the products of “natural resources”; (3) sex and its products in the regeneration of the species; (4) subjectivity and its material and intersubjective products, including knowledge; (5) authority and its instruments, in particular of coercion, to ensure the reproduction of this pattern of social relations and regulate its changes.

Through the years, Quijano offered changing modulations of the CMP. However, the core remains in all of them. The CMP cannot be formalized. That is why it shall be conceived as both a structure of management and a frame of mind. The first is a mobile structure, and the second a structured frame of mind that cannot be fixed in mathematical formulae, which would kill the fluidity of the frame of mind/structure of management that the CMP is. Quijano’s philosophical argument behind his outline of the CMP as shown in the previous quotation is expressed in this paragraph: “The current model of global power is the first effectively global one in world history in several specific senses. To begin with, it is the first where in each sphere of social existence all historically known forms of control of respective social relations are articulated, configuring in each area only one structure of systematic relations between its components and, by the same means, its whole.”⁴⁰

This partial paragraph, although abstract, is crucial to understand the scope of what Quijano was sensing and perceiving: nothing less than the underlying structure of Western civilization. Quijano makes this abstraction more specific in the second part of the paragraph, which I take as a launching pad for the three simultaneous movements described in the following pages. He adds:

It is [also] the first model in which each structure of each sphere of social existence is under the *hegemony of an institution produced within the process of formation and development of that same model of power*: thus, in the control of labor and its resources and products, it is the capitalist enterprise in the control of sex and its resources and products, the bourgeois family in the control of authority and its resources and products, the nation-state, and in the control of subjectivity, the domain of knowledge/ understanding.⁴¹

He adds that “each one of those institutions exists in a relation of interdependence with each of the other. Therefore, the model of power is configured

as a system [a structure of management and frame of mind in my vocabulary]; finally, this model of global power is the first that covers the entire population of the planet.⁴²

Over twenty years have elapsed at the time I am writing this introduction since Quijano formulated the concept of “coloniality” in the essay “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Social Classification,” from where I extracted the previous quotations.⁴³ His insights have not lost the force of their initial formulation.⁴⁴ The transformations of the world order since the publication of his essay have enriched the scope of Quijano’s vision. Maintaining his basic discernment, in the previous excerpts, I slightly modified his wording and his ordering of the various areas of human existence. I elaborate on these four areas of existence in the double movement of the *constitution of the CMP’s interiority simultaneous with the CMP’s destitution of its exteriority*. Exteriority is not an ontic “outside” that exists beyond the CMP; exteriority is the ontological outside created in the process of its epistemic (knowledge and understanding) and subjective (aesthetic) constitution. Both exteriority and interiority parallel the extramural and intramural acting out of the colonial and imperial differences that I mentioned above. Each area of existence is affirmed and established at the expense of those made destitute. Epistemic and aesthetic responses healing colonial wounds emerge in this double movement.

To better understand the responses, let’s outline the four basic domains of the CMP, slightly modified:

- 1 KNOWLEDGE/UNDERSTANDING. From 1500 to 1800, theology was the hegemonic frame for knowing and understanding. From 1800 to today, secular sciences (natural and social sciences and the humanities) displaced theology. Both frames were instrumental in the long processes of Westernization of the planet. Subjectivities (personal sensing, emotioning) and subjective relations are constituted by the overarching frames of knowledge/understanding that the subject is subjected to, even when the subject opposed the subjection.
- 2 GOVERNANCE/LEGAL AUTHORITY. In the formation and transformation of the CMP, between 1500 and 1800, Western states were theological/monarchic, while bourgeois governance (control of labor and its products) displaced monarchic states and consolidated the nation-state form after the French Revolution. The republics (*res-publica*) in South America were the first former colonies that gained independence from peninsular monarchies, formed nations, and transformed monarchic viceroalties into nation-states. Something similar happened in the second half of the

twentieth century (starting with India in 1947): nations were formed over colonial settlers' governance.

- 3 **ECONOMY.** From 1500 to 1750, the type of economy generated in the Atlantic (America, Africa, and Europe) is described in the canonical economic histories as mercantilism; from 1750 to 1945, the Industrial Revolution mutated mercantilism into industrial capitalism; from 1945 on, technology and financialization restructured the sphere of labor and its outcome.
- 4 **HUMAN/HUMANITY.** The concept of the human, and its derivation, humanity (i.e., the domain human/humanity), was established after the European Renaissance as the conceptual point of reference and point of arrival of all theologies of human destiny. Knowledge/understanding and governance presupposes human leadership, and therefore the economy, both in its practical regulations and in its political economic conceptualization, was assumed to be the task of the humans. As we will see in chapters 1, 2, 3, and 13 of this book, racism and sexism, civilization and progress, development and modernization are all keywords/concepts in the rhetoric of Western modernity, anchoring a regional image of man/human (see chapter 12) to legitimize domination and exploitation. Human and “culture” were in collusion to expel “nature” out of its realms to the extent that lesser humans were placed near nature. After the Industrial Revolution (in the domain of culture), nature became natural resources. “Standing reserve” was identified more recently by Martin Heidegger. Obviously, such abuses of humanness generate conflicts, and the abuses of “nature” are an overwhelming concern in the twenty-first century. The hierarchies of humanness that human/humanity regulates and justifies have a distorted effect in human relations in all areas of experience—that is to say in the domains and the levels of the CMP, and so in our human relations with the living universe, reduced in the rhetoric of Western modernity to one noun: nature.

These areas of experience or domains of the CMP have not been built by the creator of the universe but by human beings who appointed themselves to be the human model of humanity, concealing the circumstances that the human species and planet Earth were created by the same cosmic energy. The four domains arose at certain points in time and in certain places, and they came into being through a kind of storytelling (theological, literary, philosophical, scientific, artistic) that I call “the rhetoric of (Western) modernity.” The rhetoric of modernity created and naturalized areas of experiences that are taken for granted. My analysis of the CMP aims to show that

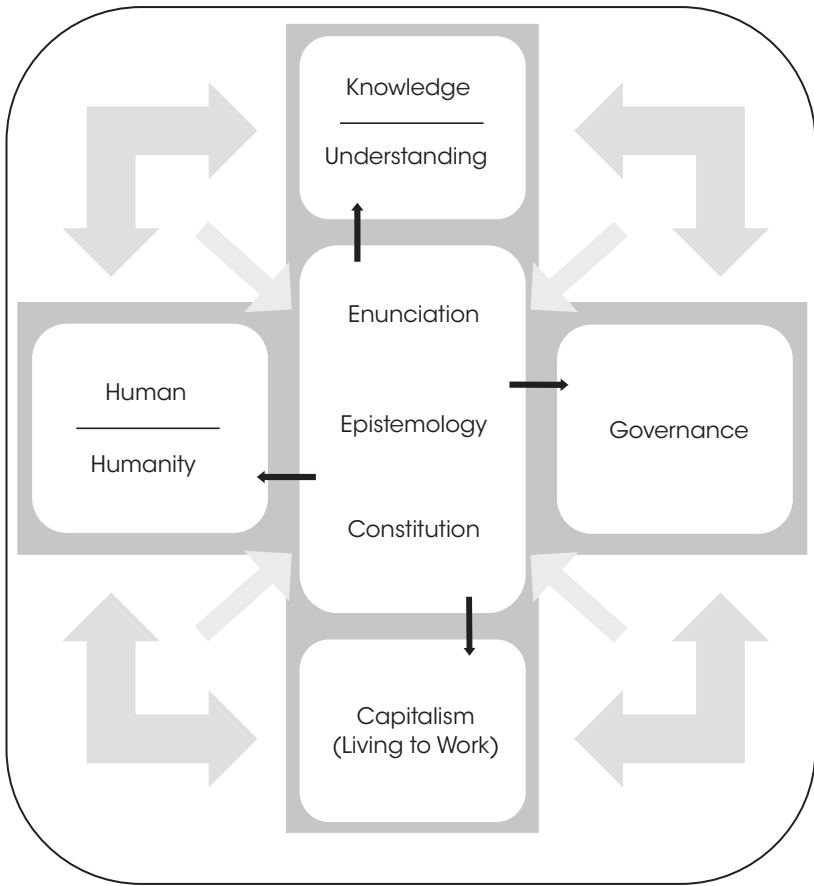


FIGURE 1.1 The *constitution* of the colonial matrix of power, the four domains, and the concealed level of the enunciation that governs and interconnects all of them.

it was constituted to have certain purposes and to achieve particular results, as specified in figures I.1 and I.2. The first step in this analysis is to recognize that the domains as described are a decolonial abstraction of what storytelling narratives—their pros and cons that either way legislate Western epistemic and aesthetic management—have built since 1500. The rhetoric of modernity is the visible manifestation of a hidden structure, the logic of coloniality, and both form the colonial matrix of power: the first as the public mask, and the second as the underground logic of domination, exploitation, expropriation, and control. When I write “modernity/coloniality,” the CMP described in figure I.1 should be graphically appended to the bottom or the top of “/”: the

CMP is both the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality, while the coloniality of power is the *technics* that calls for instruments of domination, control, and management.

Figure 1.1 shows the four domains of the CMP just mentioned: Knowledge/Understanding, Governance, Economy (in this case, Capitalism), and Human/Humanity. Each domain has been abstracted from the narratives that in their totality form the rhetoric of modernity. These narratives are based on specific purposes: salvation, progress, development, democracy, happiness. If you pay attention to all the advertising that lands on your computer screen, you will notice that the people in the advertising are either jumping, smiling, running, or doing all these at once. The domains are specific provinces of meaning built as independent units in Western civilization's structure of knowledge. That is, political theory and political economy were built in the sector of knowledge/explanation (epistemology), while arts and the humanities, cultural anthropology, and history were built in the sector of understanding/interpretation (hermeneutics), ultimately derived from master disciplines such as theology, science, and philosophy (which includes aesthetics). The domain of knowledge/understanding was modeled on the figure and needs of man/whiteness, and therefore patriarchy and masculinity came to be the spirit of the CMP's legitimization of racism and sexism. The autonomy of each domain has been increasingly framed by disciplinary formations to the extent that it has been necessary to invent the role of "the expert" within each domain, ignoring the relationality that makes each domain dependent on the other three, connected by the invisible logic of coloniality. To disclose this hidden logic, the darker side of modernity, is the urgent and constant task of decolonial investigations. Although knowledge-explanation/understanding-interpretation permeates all four domains (and emanates from the level of the enunciation), it also has its specific sphere. (Knowledge/understanding names simultaneously both the process of explanation and meaning and the events, phonemes, and things that are known and understood.)

The other three domains, Governance, Economy, and Humanity, obviously assert and lay claims to knowledge, but it is important to grasp that these domains are distinguished by their specific ways of knowing what is asserted to be known. Think, for example, of how political theory, political economy, science, philosophy, or theology, all of which presuppose human/humanity, are all procedures for *inventing* what they know and understand and do not necessarily *represent* things that exist independently of these domains' particular processes of knowing and understanding. The agencies of knowledges and understanding are granted by the level of enunciation (see below). The

domains of the economy and governance, for instance, frame areas of human experiences at the crossroads of knowing/understanding (and they presuppose professional and human ranking of the actors managing each domain). To get a PhD or an MBA you have to conform to disciplinary regulations and social-institutional expectations. Economy frames a domain of experience established by the junction of codified words and deeds—those governing financial exchanges, labor, and so forth—but only those words and deeds that apply to what you do under the presuppositions of what the domain of economy is established to embrace. “Capitalism” in the vocabulary of Western modernity (liberal and Marxist) names the domain of economy in the CMP but sidelines the relevance of the other three domains and the enunciation that regulates and interrelates all four domains. In this regard, political economy is a discourse that clearly reveals the latent presence of discourses in other domains (the rhetoric of modernity) as well the logic of coloniality. Yet often the domain of economy, confused with capitalism, seems to preclude asking questions about the larger issues that are embedded in the functioning of the economic domain: for example, the destitution of economic reciprocity, the administration of scarcity, and the morality of this administration.⁴⁵ For that reason, most economic debates today are about “improving” the economy and defending capitalism rather than questioning what role the economy should play if not at the service of accumulation, engendering corruptions, and related crimes. “Improving” in the previous sense points toward changes in the content of what is assumed to be the only alternative—the taking for granted in the CMP that the domain of the economy equals capitalism. The emphasis on “improving” precludes, not by law or public policies, but by the outright rhetoric of no better alternative, that indeed alternatives abound but are not welcome. However, asking questions about the role of the economy should go deeper to address the terms of economic conversations (i.e., the enunciation), namely, the regulations governing the ways of knowing, understanding, and acting on that domain. It implies uncoupling economy from capitalism and reconstituting the etymology of the word *oikonomie* (the regulation, *nomos*, of the household, *oikos*)—that is, the administration of scarcity rather than the administration of wealth. The frame of mind regulating and enacting the CMP’s designs has been taken up by the administration of wealth without considering the consequences, which we, on the planet, are experiencing in 2020.

When Karl Marx stated that a society’s economic infrastructure determines its superstructure, he articulated a necessary and welcome move to place the economic structure of accumulation (capitalism) in the foreground of our understanding of society. The correlation was critiqued in Europe within

Marxism itself. However, more than 150 years after Marx, and looking at the world order from the South American Andes, the correlation between knowledge/understanding (superstructure) and economy (infrastructure) needs to be significantly reformulated from the perspective of coloniality (that is, from a decolonial perspective), particularly given that in the modern/colonial world order, sensing, knowing, and believing are highly conditioned by the economy, and being aware that the actors who run the economy (the state, the banks, and the corporations, supported by the mass media and the advertising industry) are motivated by their own desires, emotions, perceptions, and beliefs in ways in which their individual interests and the well-being of (a sector of) the nation are difficult to separate. For this reason, the economy (meaning here economic coloniality or capitalism) cannot be changed if the actors running institutions do not change their assumptions, convictions, and beliefs in redirecting their desires toward the well-being of humanity at large and in harmony with living Earth.

To achieve such a difficult task, *decolonial horizons of life placing the economy at the service of life instead of life at the service of the economy are inevitable*. By “decolonial” here I mean horizons celebrating life and harmony instead of competition, exploitation, and war. Put another way, the horse of the economy must again be placed in front of the cart of life rather than having life pushing the cart of the economy, as has been the case especially since the 1950s. If hope is to be preserved, and it should be, that reconstitutions of the destituted be pursued, it will likely not be achieved by diplomatic agencies, by meetings of the UN, the G7, or the G20, for they all operate within the CMP, driven by the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. Perhaps the economy needs to be changed by the gargantuan efforts of a political society working beyond or beneath the state and the corporations, the banks, and the mass media to re-create what was devastated by Western modernity and the advent of capitalism. The politics of decolonial investigations shall contribute to and walk into the horizon prompted by the gargantuan work—and the signs of this eruption are already visible—of the *global* political society. Decolonial investigations should assist such a planetary undertaking, an undertaking that is pluriversal—meaning that it will not be a “universal” decolonial design—to reconstitute and retribute what Western modernity and its darker side, coloniality, left destituted. As a result, because decolonial knowledge/understanding permeates all the domains of the CMP, then all efforts of restitution—not returning to the past, but affirming in the present what should be preserved for the future—can only be achieved by a constant task of gnoseological reconstitution of what epistemology destituted and aesthetic reconstitution of what

aesthetics destituted. This alone will not complete such a transformation, but without it, the calamities—next to the achievements—brought about by Western civilization cannot be repaired. Albert Einstein's dictum that problems cannot be solved with the same mindset that created them is relevant today and in general, not only to the field of theoretical physics.

Whatever is done by labor—whether it be the production of commodities or of military armaments, whether it be the circulation or distribution of goods, or the administration and organization of a given economic sphere, or the acquisition of products by consumers, or the handling of those products when they are discarded, whether it be the creation of advertisements that harass you to make purchases or banks that offer you low interest on your credit card for three months, or international institutions that offer your government loans to solve the economic problems in your country without disclosing the resulting enslavement of debts—all such activities are interwoven with discourses, narratives, concepts, conversations, and a knowledge and understanding that are shared by those who are part of the game (not merely those who regulate it) and all who give their/our meaning to these activities. The meaning may be controversial. Liberal, neoliberal, and Marxist interpretations of the economy differ, but they all agree on the assumption that economy equals capitalism. Communal economies are destituted, out of the conversation (see chapter 14). The situation is similar with political theory. Political theory is an expression enclosing a vast domain of human experiences and discourses/narratives into regulations that in their unfolding always exceed one set of regulations and the enclosing. However, that frame, the frame of political economy (the domain of the economy), is a frame of Western modernity and nothing else.

If the enclosure of Western political theory, from Plato and Aristotle to Machiavelli and beyond, is now known in Zimbabwe, Bolivia, and China, its span was achieved by the expanding process of Westernization, not because the local histories of these places were the same as the local histories of the West. The epistemic colonial/imperial difference is at work here. No other civilization on the planet conceived the economy (meaning all the activities to produce, store, and exchange what is necessary to live) as an activity of exploiting labor and reinvesting the surplus to produce still more, not to mention dealing with the downstream consequences, seen and unforeseen, of such activities. Reinvesting the surplus to produce more and to satisfy the needs and desires of a global market was a radical shift that the larger, diverse, and planetary sphere of the economy made in the sixteenth century, in the Atlantic, to become the CMP's economic domain. In the making were activities that cre-

ated a type of subjectivity and of discourses managing desires that affected both the managed and the managers. The concept of *oikonomie*, derived from the Greek *oikos*, meaning “house,” and *nomos*, meaning “regulations,” was similar to the administration of the *ayllu* in Andean civilizations or the administration of the *calpulli* among the Aztecs. However, the concept of *economy* was not derived from Aymara, Quechua, Quichua, or Náhuatl, but from the Greek language, and the transformation made sense of an activity and a knowledge that mutated the administration of the *oikos* and of scarcity into managing wealth. If you would like to know more about what the *ayllu* and the *calpulli* were, I would say that *oikos* is similar to both, and that we shall see the *oikos* starting from the *ayllu* and the *calpulli* and not the other way round. To do this would be a small step toward delinking from epistemic and aesthetic hegemony and opening them up to gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions: the larger frame of knowledge, knowing, sensing, and believing that epistemology and aesthetic enclosed.

I could discuss every domain of the CMP and engage in a lengthier description of each of them, but for the purpose of this introduction it should suffice to say that the domain of government, for example, has a similar configuration to the domain of the economy. It consists of a sphere of doing (governing) and of discourses (storytelling and theories attributing meanings to the doing and world-making and governing). Likewise is the domain of knowledge/understanding. Knowledge/understanding belongs to the sphere of doing (creating, transforming, and managing knowledge, and regulating knowing and understanding, like governance and economy), and also to the sphere of discourses (storytelling and theories) that attribute meanings and world-making to knowledge and understanding. In this sense, this domain has the privilege above all others of confusing the sphere of doing with the sphere of discourses. Science and philosophy are framed in and by epistemology (explanations of the known); art and aesthetics in and by the frame of hermeneutics (understanding and interpretation of meaning). Actors in the domain of knowledge/understanding are identified by role names: scientist, theologian, philosopher, scholar, sociologist, artist, curator, journalist, etc. Hegemonic knowledge and knowing have been created, managed, and transmitted by these social roles, the institutions they/we are associated with, and the Western (modern) imperial languages. Overall, epistemology belongs to the family of science and philosophy, and hermeneutics to the realm of the humanities, each of which is an extension, within the domain of knowledge/understanding, of the domain of human/humanity. Knowledge/understanding do not exist and operate by themselves. They are created, transformed, and administered by human/humanity. What is

irrelevant to the constitution of this domain enters the sphere of destituting knowledges and understanding.

Let's explore a little further the domain of human/humanity. Unlike the previous three domains, human/humanity includes neither specific work assignments of its own (no labor of producing, distributing, or consuming commodities; no labor in governing, ruling, establishing social laws; no labor in producing and disseminating knowledge and understanding) nor the products of such labors (knowledge and interpretations; commodities; laws and edicts). Human/humanity seems, indeed, to be itself the "product" of the labor of knowledge/understanding—a product that serves well the surveillance of who fits the requirements of human/humanity and why the living universe, conceptualized as nature, became "natural resources." (See figure I.2.) The discourses bestowing meaning to the domain of human/humanity reside elsewhere in the domain of knowledge/understanding and, as we will see later in this book, at the level of the enunciation: labor in the domain of human/humanity is in the invisible hands of the enunciation. The two words "human" and "humanity" identify the doers, the actors of the enunciation as well as of the other domains, which are not separated actors but separated functions. The main function of this domain is to maintain its boundaries and to ensure that the other three domains are regulated by actors that belong to the domain of human/humanity and that any lesser humans, or any nonhumans, are kept at bay by the labor of knowledge/understanding.

The interrelations among the four domains are indicated by the double-ended arrows connecting them. Not all participant actors and observers will be aware of how the domains encroach on their lives, and this is precisely the function of the rhetoric of modernity—to hide, to divide, to obscure, to misinform. Knowledge regulates subjectivities, and this is why the decolonial epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution into gnoseology and aesthesis is necessary to disclose the hidden effects of the rhetoric of modernity and its visible and enchanting promises. This awareness comes out in decolonial analysis (hence, the need for decolonial investigations) and self-reflection, making explicit what remains implicit for actors and participants of a given domain. In writing this introduction and this book I become a *participant* in the domains of human/humanity and knowledge/understanding, and at the same time I become an *actor* who is striving to delink from the enchantments of modernity. Engaging in uncovering the logic of coloniality, and engaging in efforts to reconstitute epistemology and aesthetics into gnoseology and aesthesis, I become an actor operating in the *exteriority* of CMP (see figure I.3). Which means that, in Escher's well-known lithograph of two hands, each drawing

the other, I am a *participant* in the domains that I describe and an *actor* enacting decolonial gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution of epistemology and aesthetics.⁴⁶

Let's move finally to the promised enunciation. The four domains configure *the level of the enunciated* (i.e., what is said, the content of the conversations) in which all actors (those running the domains), all participants (those using the domains, e.g., clients using banks or patients using hospitals), and/or all observers (i.e., analysts of a given domain that are not actors or participants in it) engage in or observe conversations—oral, written, and/or communicated through imagery. “Level” here means that the domains (the content of the conversations) are in the open, visible at the surface level, but the enunciation (regulating the terms of the conversation) remains hidden. That is precisely why the politics of Eurocentric knowing was able to make us believe in the universality of the domains (knowledge, what is known as fact and/or sustained by theories) assuming that and acting as if their enunciation were universal: the universal subject of knowing, the totality of knowledge, the politics of Eurocentric research, knowledge, and knowing. “Below” the enunciated (theories circulated in books and specialized magazines, information in the mainstream and social media, in courses and seminars in colleges and universities), the hidden level of the enunciation regulates the effects of the said, implanting the images of the world or reality that appear to us in front of what is being said, managing and framing what is supposed to be there. That is why “representation” is a powerful word in the rhetoric of modernity and one to be avoided at all costs in decolonial thinking.

No domain is a homogeneous or harmonic arena of conversations. Conflict of interpretations in all the four domains and within the CMP are taken for granted. However, what is not often seen is that a conflict of interpretations in a given domain may become muddled in two ways: one is the effect of the totality of knowledge that each domain engenders, and the other is that no domain is independent of the other and of the enunciation. The enunciation connects a given domain with the rest. None of the domains are closed in themselves; they are interlocked with the enunciations and through them to the other domains. The economy is not enclosed in the totality of capitalism. Capitalism is an interpretation of a type of economy interconnected with the other domains and managed by the enunciation. This is the secret force of the imaginary of Western modernity: the constant transference of meaning among the domains through the labor of the enunciation. There are disputes, contentions, arguments, misinformation. All conversations transpire via personal, face-to-face contact or via mediated contacts (TV, internet, newspapers,

radio). The conversations and the disputes revolve around the control of a given domain. Quijano outlined the harmony and disharmony in each domain, pointing out that *inherent to the structure and flows of the CMP is the coexistence of an underlying threefold energy: domination/exploitation/conflict*. In the domain of human/humanity, the triple energy generates and maintains racism and sexism through diverse strategies of knowledge/understanding that legitimize humiliations and dehumanization. In addition, the commodification of “nature” is the product (as Quijano would say) of an epistemic labor (knowledge/understanding) in collusion with the domains of governance and economy.

In figures I.1, I.2, and I.3, I am attempting to render the triple energy of *domination/exploitation/conflict* (the spirit of coloniality of power) as the triple movement of *constitution/destitution/reconstitution*. The *constitution* of the CMP is achieved by the simultaneous *destitution* of the inconvenient and undesirable. This act of destitution brings into being colonial and imperial differences, and these differences secure the *interiority* of the CMP by inventing its *exteriority*, which generally is the place of danger and the locus of provocations to execute “imminent attacks” against the interiority. That rhetoric was common among Western Christians in the sixteenth century and among Western politicians in the twenty-first. The exteriority, conceptually expelled with all its consequences (imposing sanctions today, for example) from the interiority, now consists of forsaken places and borderlands where gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution must take place, for once placed in the exteriority, the effects of colonial and imperial difference last a long time. Exteriorities (see figure I.2) are the zones of conflict from where the energies of reconstitution emerge and are nourished (see figure I.3).

Underneath, metaphorically speaking, the level of the domains (what has been said, what is being said, the content of conversations), lies the level of the enunciation (the saying, the terms of the conversations that regulate their content (see the center of figure I.1)). In fact, the very *constitution* of the CMP and the *destitution* that creates its exteriority are regulated by enunciated knowledges (establishing the normal and identifying the enemy based on established and canonical knowledge on the side of the accuser). In other words, a leading and determinative function of the enunciation is to orient the subjects through knowledge and understanding which, at the same time, conform to the subjectivities of the manager, asserting itself as the gatekeeper of true knowledge and normal behavior for all. Power differentials between managers and between manager and managed reside at the core of the foundation, operative transformations, and governing and administering the CMP. But what do I mean more specifically by the “level of the enunciation”? Let

me begin to explain by listing its three *components*: languages, actors, and institutions.

LANGUAGES The formation of the CMP, during the sixteenth century, was implemented mainly in Latin, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, along with the backing provided by translations of Greek texts into Latin. French was very important in Europe, but France did not have a colonial strategic position, in the sixteenth century, to intervene in the making of both the New World and the Atlantic commercial circuit. French commerce and language gained ground in the colonies and in the Atlantic commercial circuits in the seventeenth century, as did English. French and English world dominance was manifested in the eighteenth century (the Enlightenment), simultaneous with the decay of imperial Spain and of the influence of Spanish language vis-à-vis the growing influence of French, English, and German. It was in the languages of the European Renaissance and the Enlightenment that the figure and the image of human/humanity was created by and modeled on the imaginations of the actors who invented themselves as such and used their own self-image of the human as a weapon to disempower “lesser” humans racially and sexually. The decisive factor of vernacular European languages in the formation of the CMP was and still is their hegemony over the control and management of knowledge, especially the hegemony enjoyed by six modern European tongues: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, and English—in that chronological order since the Renaissance—all of them grounded in Greek and Latin. Further, not only is English the dominant language of international business and diplomacy; its supremacy is complemented by the power of the dollar in international transactions, rendering other languages (Mandarin, Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, Persian, Russian, to name just a few widely spoken ones) to the level of the local and less significant.⁴⁷

ACTORS Each domain has its own primary and secondary institutions, and these are run by actors trained to run them, with specialized training and education required for the management of each domain (human/humanity, economy, governance, and knowledge/understanding). In the founding of the CMP, the original actors were generally European, Christian, and white and also mostly heterosexual, or at least they publicly endorsed heteronormativity. Social class and educational institutions ranging from private schools to private universities and private teachers constituted a preliminary filter for those who were to become actors guarding the domains, and this guardianship meant that they controlled the level of the enunciation.

INSTITUTIONS In the formation of the CMP, monarchies set up the rules of the state (governance). Next to them were the papacy and the Renaissance university, contributing to statecraft via the domain of knowledge/understanding; banks, mainly in Italy's three financial and commercial city-states—Florence, Genoa, and Venice—were the relevant city-states of the domain of the economy. Eventually, the nation-state was to become the main governing institution; secular science and philosophy established patterns for the control of knowledge/understanding (e.g., Descartes, Newton, Kant); and banks' roles continued and expanded to serve new transatlantic "companies" (e.g., the British and Dutch East India Companies in South Asia [India] and Southeast Asia [Indonesia]) that had been established to control mercantilism. The advent of the Industrial Revolution redefined the overall sphere of the economy, consecrating the values of material conditions of living that naturalized the instrumentalization of exploitation, expropriation, accumulation, and reinvesting surplus income. The pursuit of happiness was pegged to the horizon of life framed by the economy of having more. We could follow the story from the sixteenth century until the creation of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and similar economic institutions. Today the nation-state remains in place in the area of governance, while the Western university, which has gone through significant transformations, remains the main institution for the coloniality of knowledge. Its expansion beyond Europe since the sixteenth century (the creation of, for example, the University of Mexico in 1552 and Harvard in 1636 and the recent opening of Harvard in Singapore, Northwestern in Doha, and Duke in Kunshan) has made it a fundamental institution for the Westernization of knowledge, beyond the collaboration of local elites creating national universities and importing the model of Western universities, with all the attending consequences, in the domains of governance, economy, and humanity/human.⁴⁸

The three components of the enunciation merge human/humanity and knowledge/understanding and both define and regulate (knowledge, knowing, sensing, emotioning—subjectivity) the domains of governance and economy. Although the three also define and regulate the domains of knowledge/understanding and human/humanity, there is a crucial difference between the former and the latter, and it is this: while governance and economy are not integral parts of the act of enunciation (that is, governance and economy are both domains of what is enunciated), human/humanity and knowledge/understanding are both inherent in all enunciations, and both regulate governance and the economy. The difference between governance and economy on the one hand and human/humanity and knowledge/understanding on the

other, is that the latter are the heart of the enunciation while the former are the results and consequences. That politics and economy return like a boomerang to actors and institutions regulating them is certainly true. But what is undeniable is that governance and economy are not regulated by themselves, even if it is a machine who does the work. In this case, the machine is not governance and the economy but the program that regulates politics and economy. Human/humanity and knowledge/understanding both have privileged positions in the CMP for being at once the *content* of two domains and the *manifestations of actors and languages, which, through institutions, regulate the four domains*. Epistemology and aesthetics are two key concepts regulating knowledges, knowing, and subjectivities. *Herein lies the urgency to delink from both and take on the decolonial gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions of both*. This doesn't mean suppressing them (which cannot be done now), but reducing them to their own deserved local size. In this regard, the *constitution* of the CMP, decolonially construed, echoes the emphasis that liberals and Marxists place on political theory and political economy: governance and economy are epistemic fabrications managed by human elites who saw and still see themselves as human/humanity, believing in the universality of their knowledge/understanding. Liberalism and Marxism are after all two heirs of the Enlightenment. And the Soviet Union was a failed way to deal with the imperial difference, because it was acting on a Western system of ideas which did not correspond with or emerge from Russia local history. What was local were the rage and the anger against the Russian czarate. But the instrument, in this case communism, was borrowed.

The flows between the domains and the two-way exchange between the level of the enunciation and the level of the domains are what secures the logic of coloniality and sustains the rhetoric of modernity. The imaginary constructed by the rhetoric of modernity—progress, development, democracy, growth, happiness, terrorism, national security, all Trojan horses of the rhetoric of modernity—is carried on by the destitution power of the logic of coloniality. It is in these *flows* (indicated by the arrows connecting the domains among themselves and the enunciation with the domains) where one can perceive the interdependence between the content and the terms of the conversations that regulate the saying. The domains jump to your eyes and senses; the enunciation is hidden. That is why, as mentioned before (but it is helpful to repeat it here), the politics of Eurocentric knowing was able to posit its regionality as universal. The enunciation was hidden under the belief that European men, institutions, and languages (grounded in Greek and Latin) were easily transplanted to the rest of the planet and good for all the rest of *men*. Since

the enunciation controls the domains enunciated, no single domain can be properly understood without connecting it to the other domains and to the enunciations and attending to the double and simultaneous movement of constitution/destitution. Attaining this understanding is the fundamental task of decolonial analytics. It is the first step in the process of delinking—to know from what one should delink—and then to focus on the work of what needs to be reconstituted. There is no universal model of such needs. They depend on the geopolitics and the body-politics (where and who is responding to destituted humanity-racism and -sexism) of the actors engaging in gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions.

Let's now look closer at the *flows*. Economy, for instance, is obviously related to governance, to knowledge/understanding, and to human/humanity, and it cannot be properly understood if it remains within the limits in which the domain has been framed by the discipline of political economy that, as common wisdom goes, began with Adam Smith. However, economic praxis among humans did not begin with Smith! The flows between the domains find their consistency and coherence in the level of the enunciation. It is there that the holistic configuration of CMP can be perceived, hidden under the domains constructed as specific fields of investigations requiring the labor of "experts." The implicit prohibitions—a consequence of managing belief and subjectivities—to investigate the domains beyond disciplinary regulations and actors' expertise within the discipline ensures that questions are not asked about the assumptions sustaining the domains, which are taken for granted by the gatekeepers: the actors, institutions, and languages. The particular language in which something is said carries the connotations of the *levels* of authority, prestige, persuasiveness, and so forth, and all together are essential to the impact of what is said. However, what it is said generally deviates the attention from the saying (the enunciation). Social media has taken advantage of this: what counts in social media is what is said—not who said it, why, when, and with what purpose. In national politics, Republicans and Democrats differ in the content (the enunciated), but their saying partakes of the same locus of enunciation. There is no fundamental disagreement, for example, between Republicans and Democrats when it comes to the very foundations of capitalist economy in its corporate, financial, technological, and military branches, or when it comes to supporting Israel and demonizing Iran. The content and the said place the two parties in opposition and hides that they share the enunciation. Similarly, the divergent schools and tendencies in art and literary histories are all grounded in a Western idea of what art and literature are. Conflicts

of interpretation and “new” histories are divergences in the content, but not in maintaining the regulatory power of the enunciation. These types of histories, and the historians securing their continuity and changing the contents but not the terms regulating the practice, do not call into question the entity or phenomena of which they are writing. As long as the discourse remains within the enunciative framework of Western modernity, judgements can be made about the “truth,” or the appropriateness, or the justice, or whatever, of a particular enunciation. Stepping outside Western modernity, however, brings other factors into play. Asking when, why, and by whom a certain concept came into being in order to designate and analyze a fluid set of phenomena and experiences is a decolonial concern for the simple reason that epistemic and aesthetic matters cannot be pursued by accepting the meaning, definitions, and conceptualizations provided by the rhetoric of modernity and anchored in the enunciative level of the CMP. Here I close the overall description of the CMP’s *constitution*. I move now to the simultaneous movement of destitution. In the pages, one comes after the other. But in *reality* they are simultaneous.

III.2 Destitutions

Figure I.2 maps the general areas of *destitution*, which are simultaneous with the *constitution* of each of the CMP’s domains. However, destitutions are regulated by the level of the enunciation where the systemic logic of coloniality is at work in all the domains at once, although the surface effect is that it happens only in the domain in question. Take unemployment, for instance. It appears to be an issue of the economy. But who are the unemployed in the domain of human/humanity? Why does governance allow this to happen? What is the knowledge/understanding that naturalizes unemployment as the consequence of economic and financial “crisis”? Last but not least, the justification and legitimation in each domain are secured by the hub, so to speak: the enunciation regulating each domain and all domains.

Again, figure I.2 maps the general areas of destitution simultaneous with the process of the constitution of the CMP, as well as its subsequent transformations. For example, the destitution of barbarians in space in the sixteenth century became the destitution of primitives in time in the eighteenth century and of terrorists located ideologically rather than spatially or chronologically in the twenty-first century. How does destitution work? Knowledge/understanding and governance, for instance, complement each other to invalidate the communal wisdom in which labor and knowledge are necessary to live, rather than

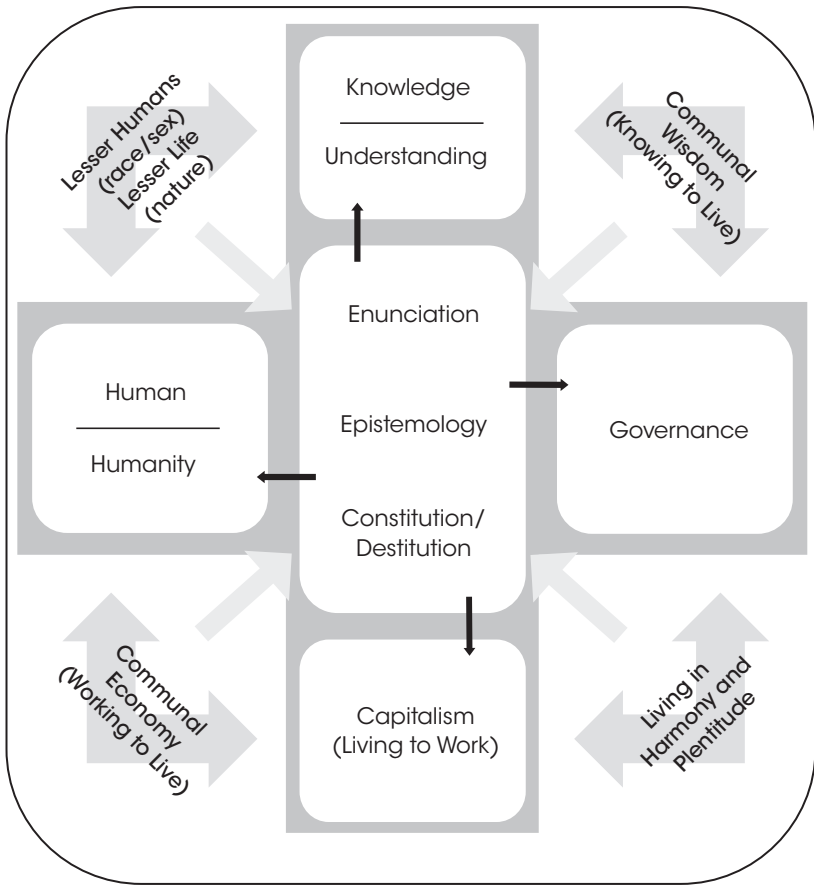


FIGURE 1.2 The double and simultaneous movements of *constitution/destitution*. Each domain is built by destitution and is managed by the enunciation, which, like the unconscious, is not visible but working behind the scenes.

the inversion that CMP enacted: one lives in order to work and to know; life at the service of the economy and knowledge instead of economy and knowledge at the service of life. Governance and economy work together to promote competition, success, and innovation, and in so doing divide society and prevent the possibility of living in the harmony and plenitude essential to the philosophy of epistemic and aesthetic reconstitutions promoting harmony with communal wisdom and a communal praxis of living. Remember: the communal implies *vincularidad* (relationality) with all the living that surrounds us and the cosmic life that made that possible. “Nature” is no longer a needed concept for decolonial communal thinking. “Nature” is a concept, not a “reality.” Try

to live and think while concentrating on the energy of life instead of on an object, nature, and you will most likely live without “nature.” When nature is destituted (hidden from view), so are the marvelous and multifarious energies of life that cannot be rendered with one single noun. Instead, coloniality of power works in tandem through economy and human/humanity to demolish communal and sustainable economies in favor of economies of accumulation and growth, in which racial and sexual discrimination manipulated in the domain of human/humanity add their antagonisms to a government and economy that threaten the Earth and the biosphere. These “realities” solidify the arrogance of some to the detriment of colonially wounded others, yet they become the sites where decolonial energies for epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution emerge and work to confront and delink from the component of enunciation which, as I mentioned before, regulates all the domains in the double movement of constitution/destitution (see section III.3). With these general maps in mind, let’s look for signposts of reconstitution coexisting with the signposts of constitution/destitution examined in the previous section.

Briefly, the constitution of each domain implies the destitution of the undesirable and the inconvenient. And since the enunciation regulates the constitutions of the domains, *de facto* coexisting enunciations are suppressed. That is why the idea that non-Europeans cannot think was established and thrived (see the epilogue). However, that is not all; constitution/destitution provokes the drive and will to reconstitute. Here is where decoloniality and de-Westernization, two different responses—one in the sphere of governance and interstate relations and the other in the sphere of knowing, knowledge, understanding, and subjectivity—come to the fore. Constitution/destitution engenders reconstitution, and modernity/coloniality engenders decoloniality and de-Westernization.

III.3 Reconstitutions

III.3.1

At this point I will introduce a conceptual clarification that was left ambiguous, on purpose, up to this point. This is the issue: epistemology and aesthetics, two Western concepts delineating the sphere of knowing and knowledge (the first) and the sphere of sensing and sensed (the second). My claim, after Quijano, that the basic decolonial task consists of “epistemological reconstitution” doesn’t mean that what we want is to “fix” epistemology and aesthetics. It means that it is necessary to disengage and delink from them. Quijano said “to divest oneself”: “It is not necessary, however, to reject the whole idea

of totality [of knowledge] in order to divest oneself of the ideas and images with which it was elaborated within European colonial/modernity. What is to be done is something very different: to liberate the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity.⁴⁹ Now, to divest oneself from the politics of Eurocentric knowing and knowledge, one needs to start from someplace else. Which means that epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution cannot be advanced, providing new interpretations of the already constituted domains and hegemonic vocabulary. A decolonial political theory, for example, cannot be a “new” theory with the CMP regime of constitution/destitution. It has to start from the exteriority of the destituted. There are two ways of doing it. Coloniality, for example, was a concept that emerged in the Third World, not in the North Atlantic, although it is derived from Western vocabulary: “colonial” referred to Roman colonies and Spanish, French, British settler colonialisms. One could argue that instead of striving for democracy and happiness, which are two key concepts in the Western rhetoric of modernity, one should strive for harmony, equilibrium, and plenitude. From this perspective, the philosophies of Ubuntu (a Nguni Bantu term, living for the extended communal) or Sumak Kawsay (a Quichua term, living in harmony and plenitude with the living Earth) would allow us to divest ourselves from *democracy and development*. Or one could appropriate Western concepts that have been destituted from the hegemonic vocabulary constituting the totality (universality) of knowing and knowledge—for example, *gnosis* and *aesthesis*. From this point on I reframe the epistemic and aesthetic into gnoseological and aesthesis reconstitutions. I am not proposing to “replace them.” Epistemology and aesthetic will continue to exist; they have been hegemonic options for a long time. What I propose is to bring forward with force the decolonial option by reducing epistemology and aesthetics to its own size and reconstituting gnoseology and aesthesis. This double move sustains the politics of decolonial investigations.

For several reasons, “gnosis” has been sidelined in the Western vocabulary, and “epistemology” took over. The Greek word “gnosis” means “a knowing, knowledge; a judicial inquiry, investigation; a being known.” In Christian writings, it means “higher knowledge of spiritual things” (from PIE, *gnō-ti-*, from the root *gno-* or “to know”).⁵⁰ My use of the term here goes back to my own book *Local Histories/Global Designs*.⁵¹ Back then I followed up on Valentine Y. Mudimbe’s recourse to “gnosis” in his classic book *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*.⁵² The reason Mudimbe revamped the concept, as he explains it, was that he was asked to write a report on African philosophy. When he began to explore the issue, he realized that African

thoughts, in African languages, which verbalize knowing and the known, did not match what Europeans called “philosophy,” which is verbalized in vernacular European modern and imperial languages grounded in Greek language. His move revealed to me the colonial epistemic difference, which was the concept around which I built the argument of *Local Histories/Global Designs*. The global scope of “philosophy” beyond its regional sphere was due to both global political and economic expansion and with it the assumed universality of Western knowledges and ways of knowing. Which means that if in Europe, philosophy is a way of thinking, it must be the same all over the planet, and if is not, then there is an epistemic deficiency that has to be remedied. Coloniality was the remedy. The fabrication of the epistemic difference to provide the cure (destitution) presupposes the ontological difference of people who are epistemically deficient.⁵³ What Mudimbe did was in fact pure and simple gnoseological reconstitution, which is expressed in the book’s subtitle: *Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. He did not elaborate on aesthetics but it was implicit: knowledge and knowing control subjectivity—sensing and emotioning. That is, knowledge cannot be standardized and measured according to the politics of European knowing, and especially of philosophy. What Mudimbe referred to as African gnosis (African thinking and wisdom) is not based on ancient Greek philosophers but on the ancestrality and languages of Africa. However, the entanglement with coloniality of knowledge makes the colonial epistemic difference unavoidable and therefore yields the difficult task of epistemic reconstitution.

The second concept, aesthetics, has been colonized by aesthetics—which means it has been destituted in the processes of constituting aesthetic regulations. Looking for the etymology of “aesthetics,” I found this: “1798, from German *Ästhetisch* (mid-18c.) or French *esthétique* (which is from German), ultimately from Greek *aisthetikos*, ‘of or for perception by the senses, perceptive,’ of things, ‘perceptible,’ from *aisthanesthai*, ‘to perceive (by the senses or by the mind), to feel,’ from PIE **awis-dh-yo-*, from root **au-* ‘to perceive.’”⁵⁴ “Perception by the senses” was displaced and replaced by aesthetics: “the sense-perception of the beautiful and the sublime” and, in Hegel, the perception of the beautiful and the sublime in the “fine arts.”⁵⁵ Aesthetics colonized aesthetics, which means that it destituted the overall meaning of “perception by the senses,” reducing it to the regulation of “fine arts.” However, a certain sense of aesthetics was established that we see today in the expression “aesthetic surgery” as well as in fashion and design. In so doing, Kant and Hegel standardized “art,” and art became, like philosophy, the universal concept to name, describe, refer, and explain what has been done and is being done in non-European culture that

can be appropriated or destituted by the concept of “art.” To the extent that asking why aesthetics is defined in relation to art and why art provided the ground for aesthetic education was literally out of the question. So I am disobeying, asking the question and delinking from aesthetics to encounter aesthesis. When it comes to coloniality, art and aesthetics were used to talk “about” objects and people’s attitudes outside of Europe and to label them art and aesthetics. Such a method serves well to devalue and destitute the meaning that a given object or performance has for the community in which the object has been made and the relations that the community establishes with the object or performance. “Perception by the senses” is beyond “art” and “aesthetics.” It is in our daily praxis of living, professional and personal; it invades all we do and shapes our subjectivity. Gnoseological and aesthesis reconstitutions, then, mean to recover and reconstitute gnosis and aesthesis and to delink from epistemology and aesthetics. In fact, what I am describing here as gnoseological (knowing and knowledge) and aesthesis (being and sensing) reconstitutions are not new phenomena; they don’t need to wait for independence or decolonial state formation, as happened during the Cold War. I will identify historical moments of reconstitutions, describing the genealogy of decolonial political theory from Guaman Poma de Ayala, Ottobah Cugoano, Mohandas Gandhi, and Frantz Fanon (see below). Gnosis and aesthesis name the energy of liberation that emerges at the very moment of colonial domination and at any moment in which the simultaneous movement of constitution/ destitution is at work.

III.3.2

Let’s now consider the work of reconstitution illustrated in figure I.3. In the following pages I trace a genealogy of decolonial thinking: the responses to modernity/coloniality as soon as they emerged in the sixteenth century. In Anahuac (the Aztec territories), the Maya area, and the Tiwanaku and Tawantinsuyu, the areas first invaded after the extermination of Arawak/Taino First Nations in the Caribbean, the population did not receive with joy the Spaniards’ invasions. Rejections (what today is called anticolonialism) were the first manifestations. With time, reorganization followed and presupposed reconstitutions based on the knowledge, knowing, sensing, believing of the original population. Of course, reconstitutions of their praxes of living at that time were not framed as decolonial gnoseology and aesthesis. There was no place for second-order self-reflections on what they were doing. But the energy, the will, the indignation, the anger were there and did not go away through the centuries. The seeds for the genealogy of decolonial thought (all action against

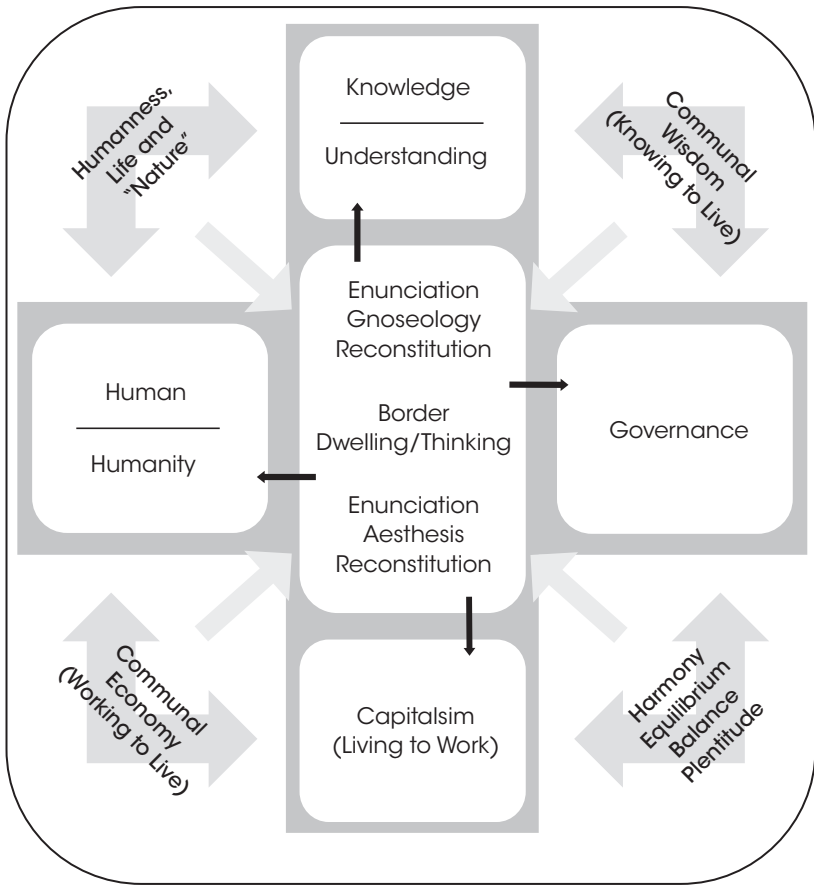


FIGURE 1.3 The movements of *gnoseological* and *aesthetic reconstitutions* indicate the myriad of responses rising from the energy, experiences, and knowledges of the destituted, both in the sphere of de-Westernization and in decoloniality at large.

the Spanish invasions and for their own reconstitutions presupposes reasoning and thinking) were planted. With time, and as European expansion moved from the New World to the Old World, the decolonial rejection and reconstitutions were manifested and continue to be so. In what follows I outline a genealogy of decolonial thoughts without which this book could not have been written. I am not reporting as a detached and scholarly observer based in the social sciences and the humanities. What I am saying and arguing is embedded in the genealogy of decolonial thought, without which thegnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions that I am proposing could not have been

possible. Hence, I am delinking from the genealogies of the social sciences and the humanities to embrace and dwell in the genealogy of decolonial thought that I outline in the following pages.

With these clarifications in mind, I return once again to the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century in the South American Andes. The opening character of this story is Guaman Poma de Ayala, born around 1535 (three years after Francisco Pizarro entered Cuzco). He was born into a noble family that lived at a certain distance from Cuzco (the center of the Inca dwelling and administration, the Incanate) in what is today the province of Ayacucho. His father, based on what we know, was a lord (i.e., leader) of the dynasty, a group conquered by the Incas. In his adult life he worked as an administrator in the Spanish viceroyalty of Peru, an invaluable experience for knowing the Spaniards and sensing the power differential shaping the emotions on both ends of the spectrum. This was a reason for Guaman Poma to build his argument in a sustained double critique, to the Spaniards and to the Incas. Guaman Poma showed us the way (the “method”): delinking from dichotomies (e.g., either/or) is a necessary step in decolonial thinking and living. For Guaman Poma, disobeying dichotomies was not a “discovery” but just the praxis of living and thinking of people that for centuries did not need European (Spanish, in this case) modes of thinking. Furthermore, in Quechua and Aymara languages, dichotomies are always complementary, two moieties of a totality. Each element of dichotomy in a duality is half the story. From the entanglement and power differential of distinct modes of reasoning, border thinking emerged: Guaman Poma’s reasoning was grounded in the millenarian memories of his language and praxis of living, but it had to negotiate with the Spaniards, who were in a dominant position, politically and intellectually.

Guaman Poma appropriated the Bible and took it to task, claiming to be Christian and yet rejecting the Castilian missionaries’ intentions of converting the people of Tawantinsuyu (the Incas’ territory) to Christianity. Claiming to be Christian allowed him to reveal the brutalities and violence of Spanish soldiers and adventurers, legitimized in the name of Christianity. He corrected the stories about his people told by Spanish missionaries, soldiers, and men of letters and anchored his narrative in the collective ancestral memories, praxes of living, and ways of being of Tawantinsuyu. The structure of governance he reconstituted (a truly gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution) conveyed the force of his sensing, belief, and emotioning. Disregarding Castilian political theories derived from Plato and Aristotle, which he may have learned from his everyday experience rather than by doing careful scholarly work on Western political theories, and attentive to the demographic composition of the

Spanish-named viceroyalty of Peru, he proposed to Philip III, king of Spain, to solve the chaos engendered by the Spanish invasion and Indigenous resistance, to deal with the Tawantinsuyu. To have an idea of what that situation may have been, imagine Iraq after the US invasion in 2003. The analogy is more than pedagogical: it is connected by the persistence of the coloniality of power through the centuries (which I outline in the chapters of this book). By the end of the sixteenth century, the viceroyalty of Peru was built on the destitution of Tawantinsuyu. Its demography had changed significantly. Beyond the inhabitants of Tawantinsuyu, there were Spaniards, Muslims, and Africans (some of them could have been Muslim, too). “Tawantinsuyu” is generally translated as “land of the four regions”; sometimes “bounded together” is added. Indeed, it means “the land of the four (*tawa*) united *suyus*.” The four *suyus* were named Antisuyu, Collasuyu, Chinchaysuyu, and Contisuyu. Based on what we know, Guaman Poma was born into a noble family in today’s Ayacucho, in the Collasuyu area, south of Cuzco. To better understand Guaman Poma’s emotional and rational turmoil, it is important to note that the Inca territory was not an “empire,” as it is most often called. Since the ruler was an Inca and not an emperor, the territory was an “Incanate.” Without making this distinction, the colonial differential in which Guaman Poma was operating would be misunderstood. Furthermore, this distinction illustrates how coloniality of knowledge works by constituting a universe of meaning and by destituting, in the same move, coexisting knowledges and knowing. Imagine if I referred to the “Roman Incanate” instead of the Roman Empire. Hence, Guaman Poma’s proposal was to reorganize not an “empire” according to Roman legacies in Europe, but to reorganize Tawantinsuyu while being attentive to his own language and memories as well as to his own present. Guaman Poma had to deal with the viceroyalty form of governance, the transplantation of the Spanish monarchic state over the ruins of Tawantinsuyu. Now you see how border thinking emerges from dwelling in the border, where entangled praxes of living and thinking are structured by power differentials.

Guaman Poma was confronted with four demographic groups. He proposed that each group have its own *suyu*. Originally, each *suyu*, and the relations of each *suyu* with the other three, embodied a complex communal (economic and cultural) organization based on Andean praxes of living and thinking. Guaman Poma was not proposing to replicate that, but simply to inscribe in the present the governing structure that his people had sustained for thousands of years and that the Spaniards were hard at work to destitute and replace with their own. The Spaniards’ past was neither that of Guaman Poma nor that of his people. Why should Spaniards’ comfort prevail? The reconstitution

of Tawantinsuyu resulted in something different from what it had been; at the same time, the viceroyalty governance was unacceptable and, consequently, Spanish political theory was also unacceptable. The outcome of Guaman Poma's efforts was sustained border thinking to achieve the gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions (his knowing and sensing prevailed) of Tawantinsuyu. His monumental *New Chronical and Good Government* (1616), which was the work of several years (presumably starting in the 1580s), is just that: a monumental effort of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution of Western epistemology and aesthetics. It was composed as a letter of about four hundred folios addressed to His Majesty, King Philip III.

Most likely, Philip III did not pay much attention to the letter and proposal. But he must have saved it, for in the early twentieth century Guaman Poma's letter was "discovered" in the Royal Library of Copenhagen. How it ended up there is for another argument. Relevant to the point of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution is the following: the manuscript was lost to sight for three hundred years, and when it reappeared, it was a scholarship gold mine. However, the underground praxes of living and thinking persisted in the body memories of the Quechua- and Aymara-speaking people in the Andes. The spirit of Tawantinsuyu did not go away although the Inca ruling class was dethroned and physically destituted. The recent debates in the rewriting of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian constitutions, in which the first is declared a "plurinational State" and the second "a multicultural secular State," cannot be understood as non-Indigenous initiatives. Looking back to Guaman Poma de Ayala's "good government," it is obvious that he was proposing a multiethnic or plurinational reorganization of Tawantinsuyu. Guaman Poma may have read some of the canonical text of Western civilizations circulated by missionaries and men of letters. He names some authors. I surmise that his reading was to know what needed to be avoided (delinked) rather than looking for models to solve the problem of governance. He had his own tradition, no need to borrow from the Spaniards' traditions. Furthermore, when we look at the Zapatistas' Juntas de Buen Gobierno, a governing organization based on Indigenous knowing, knowledge, sensing, and praxes of living, it is inviting to think that invisible channels of memory run through what Rodolfo Kusch described as "América Profunda" (Deep America). Guaman Poma's sensing and emotioning (and through him the Andean memories) saturate the *New Chronicle*. His work is a paramount decolonial monument of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution grounding and nourishing decolonial thinking today. It is not by chance that Aníbal Quijano, in the territories of the Inca civilization, came up, right at the end of the Cold War, with the concept of coloniality of power.

The 1980 publication of Guaman Poma's work, edited by Rolena Adorno and John V. Murra with translations from the Quechua by Jorge Urioste, disseminated the book beyond the somewhat limited circulation it had had to that point.⁵⁶ Beyond revamping scholarship on the work and the author, the edition fostered the resurfacing of decolonial conversations in the 1980s. Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o published a landmark collection of essays, *Decolonizing the Mind* (1987), revamping the tasks of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution that was already at work during the Cold War (Aimé Césaire, Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Patrice Lumumba, Steve Biko). "Decolonizing the mind" would have been a project out of place in the middle of revolutionary struggles during the Cold War. However, in the 1980s the struggles for decolonization and nation-state building had run their course. The potent thoughts that paralleled and intermingled with the revolts that expelled the colonial settler for occupied territories did not go away. Today we could say that while the goals of expelling the settler and building nation-states in the colonized territories is no longer a viable project, decolonial thinking and gnoseological and epistemic reconstitutions are beginning to run their course.

III.3.3

A second decolonial political treatise and exemplar of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions was composed in the eighteenth century. The author, a former enslaved African in the Caribbean, was taken to London by his master, where he became politically active to end the slave trade. His name was Quobnah Ottobah Cugoano. Like Guaman Poma, Cugoano appropriated Christianity in his own terms, turning the tables to ask what kind of Christians would engage in the exchange of human beings for guns and alcohol, later selling them to slave owners in the Caribbean. For Cugoano, there was no difference between Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, or British colonists: all of them were part of a large family of lawbreakers and wrongdoers, criminals.

Contrary to Guaman Poma, Ottobah Cugoano did not have his own territory to reconstitute. He was extracted from his African community, transported, and enslaved in Caribbean plantations. His master, Alexander Campbell, took Ottobah Cugoano with him upon his return from the Caribbean to London. Cugoano was in London when he wrote *Thoughts and Sentiments of the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery: and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain* (1787), a powerful analytic narrative and a radical proposal based on his own grounded normativity, chronicling his experience of being captured, transported, and sold like millions of other Africans.⁵⁷

What he proposed was the reconstitution of slavery narratives, to that point dominated by traffickers, plantation owners, and European intellectuals, and of the concept of sovereignty. On the narrative side, Ottobah Cugoano offered a narrative from the perspective and experience of an enslaved person. It was parallel to Guaman Poma's narrative from the perspective of an inhabitant of Tawantinsuyu. Both narratives have one element in common with Bartolomé de Las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552): the critique of European brutalities, from the Spaniards to the British. But they have one important difference: de Las Casas was neither an Indigenous inhabitant of Tawantinsuyu nor a Black African enslaved person. The stakes were significantly different—the enunciation makes the difference, while the three of them share the repulsion toward the conqueror's inhumanity in the name of humanity.

Ottobah Cugoano decoupled sovereignty from the state and placed it in the sphere of human relations, claiming that no single human being had the right to appropriate, buy, sell, and enslave other human beings. This fundamental principle of human rights was absent when the French imperial revolutionaries published, adopted (in the National Constituent Assembly), and extolled the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789). Humans who were not citizens were not considered "Man" and therefore held no rights. Indirectly, Cugoano reversed Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) by directing attention in his title to a different kind of "sentiments": those of Black enslaved Africans coexisting in power differentials with the sentiments of white liberal Europeans. Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments* was published in England about a decade after Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), and one cannot avoid the inclination to read it as an indirect but explicit indictment both of European wealth at the expense of a plundered Africa and of liberal moral sentiments vis-à-vis the sentiments of enslaved human beings generally (see part II for more on the issue of human rights).

The two cases made by Guaman Poma and Cugoano teach us several lessons. The first is that the restitution of people's dignity cannot be achieved within the same epistemology that destituted them and others like them. Gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions need to start from someplace other than the epistemology and aesthetics that negated their knowledge and their humanity, and legitimized the negation in the name of humanity and *rationality*. The second lesson is that there cannot be a universal model and even less a method telling you "how to dognoseological and aesthetic reconstitution." The answer is by doing it, and if you need it your body will tell you how to do it. Think of Guaman Poma and Ottobah Cugoano in these terms. They

both appropriated the Bible to throw it in the faces of Christians who claimed to carry its truth. Their thinking and arguing were not learned by digging into theological treatises. It was through their experiences, not experiences in general, but their grounded normativity and experiences of being dispossessed in their own territory and of being extricated from their community, transported, and forced to work for others (living to work), not for themselves (working to live).⁵⁸ And the third lesson is that gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions bring forward the geo-body politics of knowing, sensing, and believing of the interested actors, the same way that the CMP was constituted to the benefit of interested actors. The global designs imprinted through the CMP touched all local histories and people on the planet. Meaning that while all local histories have their own ancestral grounding, and in that sense are diverse, they all have in common being touched, interfered with, intervened in, and destituted by the CMP. Consequently there cannot be a universal model for gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions. Decoloniality is an option, but neither a universal model nor a universal mission. Of necessity it has to be pluriversal. From this pluriversality emerges the third nomos of the Earth (the topic of chapter 14).

III.3.4

A third case in the genealogy of decolonial political reconstitutive thinking and doing is the Haitian Revolution, which in the nineteenth century introduced a distinctive outcome of decoloniality: the foundation of a colonial nation-state governance in the hands of former African enslaved people, alien to the history and memories from where the modern nation-state emerged. The outcome of the Haitian Revolution, seen in the context of decolonial revolution in Africa in the second half of the twentieth century, is parallel and inverse. Parallel because liberation and the foundation of colonial/modern nation-states was the outcome. Inverse because the Haitian Revolution was carried out by people of African descent in the New World, where all the previous struggles for colonial liberation had been achieved by people of European descent. Between 1776 and 1830, numerous “republics” or nation-states were formed in the Americas, by then a universally established name of the continents. The Haitian Revolution was the exception and an anomaly: Black enslaved Africans were not expected to take freedom into their own hands; it was expected that they would wait until the master liberated them.

Today, the meaning of the “Haitian Revolution” is being reconsidered by Haitian intellectuals who see the true decolonial revolution as residing in

the organization and survival of the Haitians themselves, in spite of the state, which, as history has shown, has been the pendulum of the local governing elites according to the interests of France and the US. Jean Casimir's detailed decolonial investigation of the history of Haiti breaks away from the modern/colonial historiography of state formation to focus on the Haitians as social subjects, a situation similar to the Zapatistas in southern Mexico. The people, former captives and the enslaved, took their destiny into their own hands as the Zapatistas did: they created and developed complex forms of organization that enabled them to fight against the plantation system and to reconstitute, in the process, their own praxes of living, thinking, being, and doing. While traditional history has always focused on the state and the heroes of independence, Casimir concentrated on the nation beyond the state and on the people as a whole within their history.⁵⁹ The lessons to be learned here are of the parallel and harmonizing streets: Casimir tells the story not as a detached historian observing the history and the present of the people to which he belongs; his work runs parallel to the gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions he reports and reflects upon. In this sense he continues the legacies of Ottobah Cugoano that have continued in the Afro-Caribbean intellectual and political histories. Scholarship on the one hand complements the living praxis of the Haitian people while on the other moving toward the decolonization of scholarship by engaging in gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution (see chapter 12).

Having said this, the historical significance of the Haitian Revolution and the formation of the Haitian state should not be overlooked, though they also should not be considered in isolation. Today, I would say—after Casimir—that the Haitian Revolution might profitably be regarded alongside the Bandung Conference, two nation-state-oriented projects in which race was a paramount topic and mover of decolonization. Of course, de-Westernization was not a possibility at the time of Haiti's revolt; yet in retrospect the Haitian Revolution remains a signpost of decolonization carried on by people of non-European descent; that was the case for decolonization during the Cold War. Whether this overstates its importance today or not, the Haitian Revolution and decolonization during the Cold War are paramount references and points of encounter between African and Caribbean decolonial thinkers in Paris and in *Présence Africaine* of the 1950s: Nkrumah, Lumumba, Cabral, Senghor, Biko on the African side, and Césaire and Fanon from the Caribbean side. The intellectual and political decolonial legacies, the wealth of ideas and proposals emanating from then, cemented the long lasting decolonial trajectories that we have seen arising in the works of Guaman Poma and Ottobah Cugoano. The Americas and the Caribbean were the initial signposts of Westernization, of

the implementation of global designs and the foundation of the CMP, which eventually reached Asia and Africa through a long and divergent process beginning in the seventeenth century (the Dutch had been in South Africa since 1652) though flourishing primarily in the nineteenth century: the British settlement in India, the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in North Africa. It is consequential that the decolonial emerged in the Americas, denying the march of Westernization. Briefly restated: decolonial politics of investigation and gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions, as Casimir's argument and twenty-five years of the Zapatistas' struggle suggest, cannot be carried on through the Western-style nation-state and within the frame of the politics of Eurocentric knowledge/understanding designed to justify the economy of accumulation and the nation-state as the basic institution of governance.⁶⁰

III.3.5

In this quick outline of the political genealogy of decolonial thinking and of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions, I would like to highlight two more important signposts: Mohandas Gandhi and Frantz Fanon. They are certainly very different from each other (just as Guaman Poma, Ottobah Cugoano, and the Haitian Revolution were distinctive in their formations, claims, and outcome), but at the same time they are extremely relevant to the pluriversal aims of both decolonial thinking and the geopolitics of knowing, sensing, and believing in which all the diversity of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions come into being. Chapter 12 is devoted to the work and thought of Sylvia Wynter, who significantly has been added more recently to the genealogy of decolonial thought. And, of course, Aníbal Quijano, whose work has provided an orientation of mine and that undergirds the entire argument of this book. Regarding placing Fanon and Gandhi alongside each other, I am not concerned here with the debate over nonviolence versus violence (which is a common topic when the two are brought into the conversation)—that is, with what Gandhi meant by nonviolence or what Fanon meant by violence, either domestically or in international contexts. What I am focusing on is their unquestionable contribution to decolonial gnoseology (knowledge, knowing) and aesthetic (sensing, emotion, believing) reconstitution. Their achievements were shaped both through their thinking and through the acts of living their lives—in short, in their praxes of living. These praxes should give us pause in the twenty-first century, sobering any false pride we may take in our decolonial victories, as well as chiding those current critics who claim that decoloniality has become an academic discipline detached from action. Certainly the

modern dichotomy of theory versus practice is applicable today, but how many of the critics making these claims are living as Gandhi or Fanon did? Where are the equivalents today of the fights they fought? What would be the corresponding challenges today to the ones confronted by Gandhi and Fanon that ask us to conjoin our thinking with our actions? Shall we be motivated to create modern/colonial nation-states, or to take hold of one like the Cuban and Iranian revolutions did? I do not have an answer for those questions. But I am convinced that the nation-state at this point is no longer a desirable decolonial horizon. Which doesn't mean that certain political gains could be attained by a progressive government. The limits, however, are set today by the dispute for the control of the colonial matrix of power between de-Westernizer and re-Westernizers, between globalists and nationalists. Nevertheless, the radical legacies of all previous decolonial thinkers are the core of the politics of decolonial investigation and reconstitutions, as much as the Greeks, the European Renaissance, and the Enlightenment are the legacies of modern and postmodern thinkers. With these caveats let's elaborate on two of their texts and bring them forward to our praxes of living and thinking today: *Hind Swaraj* (1909) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961).

Gandhi's arguments in *Hind Swaraj* are exemplars of what gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions mean. The argument is set up as a dialogue between two characters, the Editor and the Reader. To understand the thrust of my argument, it suffices to read the chapters devoted to law, medicine, and railways. One paragraph in particular makes my point clear, taken from chapter 9, on railways. The previous chapter is devoted to the Indian and British suppression of outlaw gangs in Central India (the Thugs and the Pindaris), whose members would make the list of "terrorists" today, according to the hegemonic Western view of terrorism as well as the imperial belief (or make belief) that the control of terrorism in a colonial country is beneficial, in fact liberating, for that country when, indeed, the so-called terrorists may very well be a force of liberation from imperial enforcement in that country. However, things are muddy today when the terrorists are mercenaries employed by and at the service of global designs. In any event, in the *Hind Swaraj* dialogue, the Editor and the Reader both discuss common concerns and share opinions regarding India's liberation from the British. Responding to the Reader's question, the Editor, who carries Gandhi's arguments, confronts Thomas Babington Macaulay, engineer of British education in India. The Editor says, "Macaulay betrayed gross ignorance when he libeled Indians as being cowards. Have you ever visited our fields?" He continues: "I assure you that our agriculturalists sleep fearlessly on their farms even today, and the English, you and I would hesitate to sleep where they sleep.

Strength lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies.”⁶¹

The conversation carries on into the next chapter. The Reader responds, “I do now, indeed, fear that we are not likely to agree at all. You are attacking the very institutions which we have hitherto considered to be good.” Indeed, how could someone—common sense will tell—attack institutions that carry the enunciation of “law” and in this case of the British Empire? (See section III.I.1 in this introduction, on the components of the enunciation.) You can bomb a building, but that will not dismantle the institutions that are founded on rules of knowing, on knowledge, and on the presupposition supporting that knowledge. You dismantle an institution with arguments, and it is here precisely where gnoseological and aesthesis reconstitutions come into play, “attacking” (like a virus) the enunciation that sustains the CMP: the “British version of Western knowledge.” Which means that reconstitutions do not call out only the contents of each domain but mainly the assumptions on which the contents are grounded—the enunciation. Reconstitution(s) is (are) not only a question of contesting but of rebuilding what has been destituted and what needs a parallel enunciative apparatus: actors; uses, appropriations, and disobedience to imperial languages (a revamping of destituted languages); and institutions, using existing ones and building decolonial institutions. But it is above all a question of decolonial investigations that mean to call into question the presuppositions, concepts, archives, and built institutional knowledge that manage and control the lives of the people and, by a boomerang effect, the lives of the controllers who want to preserve their privileges.

The argument on the railway may illuminate the point I am making. The Reader asks the Editor to address the introduction of railways in India in the name of progress and civilization (and here you have assumptions, concepts, narratives people live by), which the Editor has metaphorically labeled as a disease (which means disobeying, delinking, and engaging in a counternarrative of reconstitution). In this context, the Editor addresses the railways issue in medical language:

It must be manifest to you that, but for the railways, the English could not have such a hold on India as they have. The railways, too, have spread the bubonic plague. Without them, masses could not move from place to place. They are the carriers of plague germs. Formerly we had natural segregation. Railways have also increased the frequency of famines, because, owing to facility of means of locomotion, people sell out their grain, and it is sent to the dearest markets. People become careless and so the pressure

of famine increases. They accentuate the evil nature of man. Bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity. The holy places of India have become unholy. Formerly, people went to these places with very great difficulty. Generally, therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Nowadays, rogues visit them in order to practice their roguery.

What do we perceive in this paragraph regarding the constitution/destitution/restitution and the parallel formulation of modernity/coloniality/decoloniality? Do you perceive the Editor's response to colonial differences or border dwelling and border thinking? First of all, the Editor, taking advantage of questions and observations from the Reader, confronts assumptions and reasoning that are ingrained in the lives and bodies of the British settlers in India and in their metropolitan counterpart, England: the rulers justifying the invasion and settling of India. The Editor challenges these assumptions, starting from the memories of the history in the bodies and the language of his own people (*Hind Swaraj* was written in Gujarati, which confronted the language of the CMP enunciation), and he does so by *reconstituting* Indian praxes of living that the British had *destituted*. Gandhi's was the perspective of someone speaking while dwelling on the border: he knew well British ways of thinking and reasoning, and he knew well and better his own. That is dwelling on the border, the precondition of border thinking. And that is what the Editor does: look at the British from his Indian body's memories and praxis of living so that border thinking saturates his arguments. Moreover, dwelling on the border in the *exteriority* of the empire (India was exteriority in relation to the British Empire), and manifesting a full awareness of his location, the Editor is in a position to highlight what English officers like Macaulay could not understand and even less sense. The British could not understand the resistances' expressions of emotion, could even less understand that Gandhi (through the dialogue between the Reader and the Editor) was building a comprehensive argument for reexistence: *Hind Swaraj* means "Home Rule." That is, gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution at work. This is building—not just opposing or resisting—and building requires reconstitution of knowing and of being: knowledge and emotional strength, not muscle or weapons.

Gandhi is known for his "civil disobedience," which he took from Henry David Thoreau, but unlike Thoreau, Gandhi's civil disobedience led him through gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions to question the colonial episteme that Indians were cowards and effeminate, a charge that echoed the Spanish rationale to destitute Indigenous humanity. Gandhi broke the convention by asking the questions that the rhetoric of modernity prevents

being asked because of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the universality of knowledge grounded in the politics of Eurocentric knowing. In this regard, Gandhi, like Guaman Poma, released the politics of decolonial investigations. The differences between Thoreau and Gandhi come to the fore if we ask when, who, why, and to the benefit of what or whom is the argument for civil disobedience being made? If we remain at the level of the content, we flatten the meaning of “civil disobedience.” Addressing the enunciation by asking “w” questions, we bring forward the politics of decolonial investigations as well as the geopolitics of knowing, sensing, and believing. Delinking from and fleeing the controlling paws of the epistemic (“know as I know”) and the aesthetic (“be as I am”), and entering the wider realm of disobedient gnoseology and aesthesis, is the first step to entering the politics of decolonial investigations.

Gandhi’s gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions of Indian communal praxes of living through his creative rendering of “civil disobedience” and the Hindu concept *Satyagraha Ashram* couldn’t have been done without engaging the politics of decolonial investigations. Ajay Skaria helps us understand Gandhi’s move in this direction when he explains the meaning of “Satyagraha” in this way: “‘*Agraha*’: seizure of or by, Gandhi’s translation of ‘resistance.’ ‘*Satya*’: not just truth, but being; Gandhi’s equivalent initially of ‘passive.’ *Satya* is conceived moreover here not as some shared inert substance but as an active force that is everywhere constitutive of being as care and love for all beings: hence the additional translations of *satyagraha* as ‘love force’ or ‘soul force.’”⁶²

And what about “Ashram”?⁶³ Skaria again:

My question here is a simple one: what was the politics of the Gandhian ashram?

Mainstream nationalists such as Nehru, frustrated about the amount of time that the principal leader of the nationalist movement spent on the tiny ashrams, had a simple answer: eccentricity. Gandhi, obviously, did not feel this way. He said of the Satyagraha Ashram that it “set out to eliminate what it thought were defects in our national life.”⁶⁴

Skaria saw Gandhi’s ashram as a response to Western liberalism, which he, Gandhi, rejected. If Nehru was frustrated, it was because his vision for India was the liberal British political concept of the nation-state: one nation, one state. In places like India, however, this concept fails for at least two reasons: one is that one nation, one state is difficult to achieve in a territory possessing many languages, memories, and belief systems, and the other is that the nation-state form of governance did not unfold in the history of India as it did in the history of western Europe and the Americas, where the nation-state was

always ruled by people of European descent (the Haitian Revolution, of course, was an exception). In the former colonies, you can have one state, but hardly one nation. The end result is that only one nation among many nations is identified with the state, and the rest are considered “minorities,” which is an important factor in the failures of colonial/modern nation-states built after decolonization. Gandhi’s ashram was in line with his gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions to reconstitute Indian governance (like Guaman Poma did in the South American Andes and the Zapatistas have been doing) and praxes of living that were disrupted by British intrusions: first commercial, followed by their settlement. Here is not the place to evaluate whether the ashram was realistic or idealistic, possible or impossible. Rather, I view Gandhi’s project for Hindustan as emerging from a grounded normativity that parallels the Zapatistas’ *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (Councils of Good Government, which also arise from an Indigenous normativity), and from the consolidation of the communal sovereignty of the people (the *Lakou*) that Jean Casimir has illuminated for us.⁶⁵ Gandhi’s *Ashram*, the Zapatistas’ *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, South America Andean’s *Sumak Kawsay/Suma Qamaña*,⁶⁶ Nishnaabeg *Mino Bimaadiziwin*,⁶⁷ Sub-Saharan Africa *Ubuntu*,⁶⁸ and Haitian *Lakou*⁶⁹—all of them carry the weight of destituted praxes of living, knowing, sensing, believing to be reconstituted gnoseological and aesthetic, in words and deeds (see chapter 14).

Frantz Fanon is the fourth and last character of my narrative to serve as a signpost in this genealogical outline of decolonial reconstitutions. I have already advanced some of his deep-rooted decolonial contributions in the few comments earlier on Freud and psychoanalysis. Now I want to stress three additional points: (a) his introduction of *sociogenesis*, a fundamental decolonial concept; (b) his analytics of decolonization in Algeria and in the Third World generally (the analytics of the logic of coloniality in my vocabulary), and (c) his uncompromising delinking and invitation—or, better, outcry—for all of us to build what he called “a new man”: this was his call for gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions, which he had already practiced in *The Wretched of the Earth* as well as in his previous publications. His call at the time was equivalent to today’s Indigenous demands for “resurgence,” “to live in harmony and plenitude” (*Sumak Kawsay, Mino Bimaadiziwin*), and for “the belief in a universal bond that connects persons among themselves and with life” (*Ubuntu*).

A pause now to briefly comment on three points of sociogenesis’s relevance for gnoseologic/aesthetic reconstitutions.⁷⁰ Many readers may remember when and why Fanon needed a concept not available in Western vocabulary to account for an experience that shook him up. It was the moment, he tells us,

when he encountered a mother walking with her child who said, “Mom, look, a Negro.” *Sociogenesis* was the concept he needed to account for this experience, the lived experience of the Negro, as he titled one chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon knew he had black skin but did not know he was a Negro. Being a Negro is not just having black skin; it is being seen and classified by people with white skin. Racism is not biological but sociogenetic. Black skin is an ontic fact of life on planet Earth. Being a Negro is an ethnosocial classification, ontological, not ontic. This means that such classifications were not embedded in certain human beings when this species of living organisms originated on the planet but that they were invented by certain members of the human species who were successful in making many believe that classifications are *representations* of what there is. *Sociogenesis as a classification of what one sees* instead of a *representation of what there is* evinces a decolonial locus of enunciation that is parallel and coexists with the CMP enunciation. It would be like saying, “I am a Negro; yes, so what? That is your problem not mine.”⁷¹ Sociogenesis negates the constitution of whiteness by the destitution of Blackness and anchors a decolonial locus of enunciation that makes gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions possible. Reconstitutions mean to affirm oneself in the destituted zone of nonbeing, the zone of nonbeing needed for the constitution of human/humanity by actors and institutions who appropriated for themselves the zone of being.⁷²

A second point that is relevant to my argument emerges from virtually the entire narrative of Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁷³ Fanon moves from the Algerian struggles for decolonization to the pros and cons of violence, the pitfall of nationalism, national consciousness, and the simultaneous foundation of national culture and decolonial struggle. In the last chapters he gives a detailed analysis of the colonial wounds he singles out in psychological vocabulary as “mental disorders.” His narrative, analysis, and arguments could be read and interpreted following two simultaneous paths: one is the immediacy of the situation in Algeria, in the Third World, and in his own praxis of living. The others lead to the larger picture of the CMP, the colonial matrix of power, how it works in all its domains and levels, both the level of the said and its content as well as of the enunciation and its saying. Following these paths allows us to understand the *flows* relating the domains to each other and to each domain anchored in the overarching work of the enunciation that connects the domains without showing the thread of those connections. His argument has two sides: one is the analytics of the CMP, and the other is the affirmation of another enunciation, the decolonial enunciation, that allows him to enter into the mechanisms of the CMP. Here Fanon took a significant step toward

decolonial reconstitutions. His arguments are affirmations of disobedient gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions. By so doing Fanon negates what the rhetoric of modernity affirms to justify the destitutions enacted by the destructive logic of coloniality and simultaneously announces the paths toward what he called a “new man.” I read this statement as a call to delink from the social—built by the “old man” (patriarchy, masculinity, whiteness) and limited to human beings detached from “nature”—and to reconstitute the *communal* where the “new man” is one with Earth and the cosmos. “I am Black; I am in total fusion with the world, in sympathetic affinity with the Earth, losing my id in the heart of the cosmos—and the White man, however intelligent he may be, is incapable of understanding Louis Armstrong or songs from the Congo. I am Black, not because of a curse, but because my skin has been able to capture all the cosmic effluvia. I am truly a drop of sun under the Earth.”⁷⁴

My third point: Fanon’s conclusion of *The Wretched of the Earth* is the moment of his unapologetic delinking and marching toward reconstitutions of knowing and being (aesthesis). Rereading his argument on decolonization from the perspective of his concluding chapter, one finds it possible to clearly identify the prior signs that have nourished the argument. A few excerpted lines will, I hope, help the reader to understand the point I am making regarding Fanon’s place in the genealogy of decolonial thoughts. His is a signal contribution to the ongoing labor of taking the CMP’s enunciation by assault, affirming ourselves by negating the double processes of constitution/destitution, undermining the assumptions and the instrument that secured its domination. Here are a few well-known excerpts and the invitation to read them in relation to my argument. In 1961 Europe was still leading the world order. It was in the 1960s that the US displaced Europe in the global imaginary. Although well known, a few of Fanon’s words from his concluding notes to *The Wretched of the Earth* could be beneficially reread in the context of this introduction and of this book.

- 1 Now, comrades, now is the time to decide to change sides. We must shake off the great mantle of night which has enveloped us, and reach for the light. The new day which is dawning must find us determined, enlightened and resolute.
- 2 Let us leave this Europe which never stops talking of man yet massacres him at every one of its street corners, at every corner of the world.
- 3 For centuries Europe has brought the progress of other men to a halt and enslaved them for its own purposes and glory; for centuries it has stifled virtually the whole of humanity in the name of so called “spiritual

adventure.” Look at it now teetering between atomic destruction and spiritual disintegration.

- 4 Europe has taken over leadership of the world with fervor, cynicism, and violence. And look how the shadow of its monuments spreads and multiplies. Every movement Europe makes bursts the boundaries of space and thought. Europe has denied itself not only humility and modesty but also solicitude and tenderness.
- 5 So my brothers, how could we fail to understand that we have better things to do than to follow in that Europe’s footsteps. . . . Let’s decide not to imitate Europe and let us tense our muscles and our brains in a new direction.
- 6 Two centuries ago, a former European colony took it into its head to catch up with Europe. It has been so successful that the United States of America has become a monster where the flaws, sickness, and inhumanity of Europe have reached frightening proportions.
- 7 So comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions, and societies that draw their inspirations from it. Humanity expects other things from us than this grotesque and generally obscene emulation. If we want to transform Africa into a new Europe, America into a new Europe, then let us entrust the destinies of our countries to the Europeans. They will do a better job than the best of us.⁷⁵

Fanon’s words from 1961 read as if they were written yesterday, except for the event of Europe falling in desuetude in the global imaginary. They forcefully outline the three movements of the CMP: its constitution, how Europe and then the US built themselves, and the consequences of this self-building—the destitution of the larger part of the human species. Finally comes the delinking and restitution—let’s abandon, delink, Fanon says, from what Europe and the US want us to be and to do and create what he called a “new man” for a new humanity. This will require a set of guiding principles on humanness, but today, with the added devastation of planet Earth, these principles will allow us to live in plenitude and harmony, built by the people/us and not by modern philanthropic institutions who will maintain control and management of their vision of man/humanity, telling the people/us what to do according to their ideas of harmony. Restitution will not come by itself. It requires the reconstitution of knowing and knowledge and sensing and believing. This is Fanon’s strong summons and the task of decolonial politics today, and what I suggest should be preserved for the future, by us and by upcoming generations.

I close this section on gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions with two legacies from Gloria Anzaldúa. While Quijano taught us to look what modernity/rationality hides and, consequently, to look at the history of the colonial matrix of power (CMP) in the formation of the world order since 1500, Anzaldúa taught us that the majority of the planetary population dwells in the borderland and endures colonial wounds. And she taught us that the way to delink from modernity/rationality is by embracing *la facultad*.

On the conjunction of borderland and colonial wounds Anzaldúa has this to say: “The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture. Borders were set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*.”⁷⁶ Borderlands are border lines, global linear thinking at work, and the lines divide the ones who traced the line and benefit from it and the ones who have been sent to exteriority, wounded by destitutions. Border lines are both geographic and body-graphic: the subtitle of her book is *The New Mestiza*. “Mestiza” in this case refers to both “impurity of blood,” but also to sexuality: the “impurity of gender.” Anzaldúa’s lesbianism turns the plate around in her gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitution of “heteronormative purity.” Here is where *la facultad* comes forward and to the rescue. *La facultad* erupted from the praxis of living of Chicanas (i.e., women of color) and lesbians that without mentioning it invites us to recall a German white male, Immanuel Kant, and his work *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798). “Faculties” translated into Spanish is *facultades*, which in itself and following dictionary definitions means the “natural” capacity to do something. Kant employs the word to mean the disciplinary organization of the university during his time and the role that corresponds in it to philosopher and philosophy. Kant proposed a reorganization of knowledge and ways of knowing at the university, which was part of the state. That is, he was proposing a reorganization and management of knowledge to educate the citizens of the emerging nation-states—the raising of a secular European bourgeoisie. As Chicana and lesbian, Anzaldúa had little interest in fitting into the university structure of knowledge and regulation of knowing. She was rather interested in liberation of women of color and herself in the communal “we.” She highlighted the crucial concept of *la facultad*. What is it?

La facultad, Anzaldúa tells us, “is the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities. . . . It is an instant ‘sensing,’ a quick perception

arrived at without conscious reasoning.” What, then, is *la facultad* if not the living energy that propels and stores tacit or implicit knowledge? To talk about tacit or implicit knowledge is to talk about something we know. However, *la facultad* is not knowledge but the capacity of knowing in any and all changing situations; it is the living organism’s readiness to know, the knowing capacities of living organisms. But she says something more interesting to help us understand the managing and controlling institutional function of philosophy. Anzaldúa adds that “possessing this sensitivity” and being aware of it, releasing it, not suppressing it (philosophy is a mechanism of suppression of sensitivity) make us “excruciatingly alive in the word.” And, Anzaldúa adds, those who are in readiness to release the energy of *la facultad* are those who feel the repression of the coloniality of knowing, sensing, and believing, and philosophy is one important component of the coloniality of knowing. By “coloniality of knowing” I mean the taken-for-granted evaluation that reason classifies and ranks what is valid knowledge and what is not, and what is correct knowing and what is not. Anzaldúa thus writes that *la facultad* is always in readiness among “those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the dark-skinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign. *The one possessing this sensitivity is excruciatingly alive in the world*” (emphasis added).⁷⁷

IV Days Ahead

We on the planet today—and COVID-19 has been an eloquent sign—are experiencing a change of epoch, no longer an epoch of changes where the prefix “post-” can be added wherever a “novelty” or a change is sensed or perceived.⁷⁸ The prefix “post-” retains the hegemony of the epoch or era framed by the affirmation of Western civilization and the Westernization of the world from 1500 to 2000, where “newness” and “post-” celebrate changes within the same epoch. The change of era we on the planet are experiencing reduces the prefix to its own deserved size, to its regional Western scope, at the same time that it increases the proliferation of planetary temporalities. The two most perceptible manifestations of the change of epoch are the tempos of the *multipolar* interstate world order (which is forcing the US into counterreformation responses, maintaining that it is “the beacon” of the world order, according to Joe Biden’s presidential acceptance speech) and trimming down the *unipolarity* that dominated the era of Westernization.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the decolonial tempo of *pluriversity* is shrinking the domination (if not the hegemony) of Western *universality*. While multipolarity is an interstate world affair, decolonial

pluriversality is a matter of the global political society either ignored or contained by the state and institutional mass media. The global rise (if not insurgencies) of decolonial claims for pluriversal ways of knowing and being in the world, the gnoseological rights to know at every level and areas of experience, the aesthetic rights to sense and taste disregarding and disobeying epistemic and aesthetic restrictions and regulations—these are coming into being at the margins, within and beyond institutional and administrative frames. This book intends to be a contribution to the decolonial tempo of pluriversality.

Critiques to decolonial academicism have proliferated in the past two decades. The decolonial during the Cold War did not originate in the academy, but after the Cold War it made it to the university and museums. While it is an open decision not to be involved in institutional decolonial undertakings, to withdraw the decolonial from research and educational institutions would facilitate the tasks of academics and administrators that are already fighting to prevent and/or expel the decolonial from the academy and contain its spread in the museums.⁸⁰ Hence, since universities and museums have been and are two pillars of the coloniality of knowledge (epistemology) and of being (aesthetics), the decolonial options shall not withdraw. Which means that delinking from Western epistemology and aesthetics doesn't equate with delinking from the institutions. The question is what kind of decolonial work could be moved forward at existing institutions that enable the institutions to *be used* for decolonial projects instead of *being used* to preserve modern/colonial regulations of knowledge, knowing (epistemology), and sensing (aesthetics). Introducing gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions of the domains, levels, and flows of the CMP at existing institutions must be done carefully to avoid tainting decoloniality with academicism. I do understand that, as is generally the case, decoloniality could be fashionably consumed. But the political tasks of decolonial work shall not be distracted by its fashionable consumption.

This is a book published by a university press. For the reasons given above, I am not apologizing. The options that decoloniality submits were not in place, as conscientious projects, until the second half of the twentieth century. There were, as I stated in section III.3, manifestations, expressions, feelings, and thinking that today could be interpreted as decolonial because the interpreter recognizes in them a pattern that, in the past seventy years, carries the name of decolonization, which I rendered as the decolonial option. Why an option? Because the colonial matrix of power (CMP) was a machine of generating *options* sold as *representations* and gatekeepers of what there is. Here is an outline of what I mean and where we all are today. Starting from the middle of the nineteenth century, three clusters of ideas mapped the modern/colonial

frame of Western civilization. The three clusters were secular liberalism, Marxism, and conservatism.⁸¹ Conservatism was the secular version of Christian theology, although toward the end of the nineteenth century there were alliances between liberalism and Protestantism and today between neoliberalism and Pentecostalism. Catholicism remained in general associated with conservatism. Liberalism was the cluster of ideas of the emerging bourgeoisie confronted with the theological aristocracies. Socialism was a newcomer with precedents that socialists themselves (like Saint Simon or Karl Marx) may not have recognized: the sixteenth-century theological/socialist ideas of Spanish Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas. A manifestation of these underground connections is the merging of Marxism and “Lascasism.”⁸² In its turn, conservatism is a secular mutation of the position advocated by Ginés de Sepúlveda, the conservative contender of Las Casas “socialism,” while liberalism was a mutation of the theological legalists like Francisco de Vitoria and Hugo Grotius and John Locke. In sum, the three secular systems of ideas (ideologies), consolidated by the mid-nineteenth century, have their roots in the theological humanism of the sixteenth century, which were the three theological ideologies (the enunciation) securing the foundation of the CMP in all its domains: knowledge, governance, economy, and the imperial idea of the human (the enunciated).

Starting from the middle of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries, the three clusters mutated and divided. From the liberal cluster emerged neoliberalism, without of course superseding liberalism: liberalism and neoliberalism coexist in tension. Neoliberalism favors a free-market economy while liberalism requires the role of the state to maintain domestic cohesion and interstate coordination. Conservatism, for its part, exploded into radical nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century, in forms known as Nazism and Fascism, and in the second half of the century into Falangism and Franquism. Socialism became Marxism/Leninism. In Russia it generated the Bolshevik Revolution, and in China under Mao Zedong it became Maoism. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, always in the Western sector of the planet, neoliberal globalism (in the US under Barack Obama) engendered its own opposition: fundamental nationalism (in the US under Donald Trump, and in Poland and Hungary, and in the UK as Brexit). This reconfiguration and these internal conflicts are all sidelined with re-Westernization. De-Westernization belongs to a different configuration since China, Russia, and Iran have not been active players in the constitution of the CMP and its preservations through the centuries, but they have been entangled as destituted actors. Which explains why

de-Westernization today delinks from the three Western clusters of ideas and their mutations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

This quick outline of clusters of ideas—their formation and mutation from 1500 to 2000—is important to understanding the missing pieces: colonialism and the responses to it. The three major clusters (conservatism, liberalism, and socialism)—their source in the sixteenth century and their mutations since—were all complicit with colonialism; colonialism provided the motivations for the cluster of ideas, but colonial subjects did not participate in their formations and transformations. However, a coexisting cluster of decolonial ideas emerged simultaneously with colonialism. They were destituted and placed in the exteriority of the cluster. But since the second half of the twentieth century they can no longer be contained; decolonial energies have broken the chains that kept the gates locked: the decolonial cluster found its way in the second half of the twentieth century, and the de-Westernizing cluster in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The decolonial and de-Western trajectories did not originate in Europe, obviously. It was the affirmation that non-Europeans can think on their own (see the epilogue). Both types of responses to historical colonialism and to the overall rhetoric of modernity and logic of coloniality come, obviously, from former European colonies and from locales that did not endure the experience of settler colonialisms but that did not escape coloniality: Russia, China, Iran, Turkey. Not surprisingly, these current nation-states (and also India) are mutating into civilizational states. The mutation to civilizational states is a signpost both of de-Westernization and of a change of era.

Concomitantly, the physical struggles of liberation from Western settlers' colonialism in the second half of the twentieth century (the Cold War) were paralleled by a cluster of ideas, analyses, critiques, and visions outlining decolonial horizons. Decolonial energies flourishing during that time were, in retrospect and implicitly, the mutations of precedent struggles and prospective ideas perceived in the work of Guaman Poma, Ottobah Cugoano, the Haitian Revolution, and Mohandas Gandhi. That is, there was a parallel unseen river running under the mirages of the Western clusters sketched above: the decolonial option coexisting with the conservative, liberal, and socialist, their theological historical foundations and their unfolding in the present. This is one simple example of what the politics of decolonial investigations and the gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions could do: to understand the change of era and its consequences, and to reorient the praxes of living and knowing toward the reconstitutions of the communal "we" that has been destituted by the Western modern social "I."

When Quijano illuminated coloniality under the guise of Western modernity, at the beginning of the 1990s, he was not yet foreseeing that a change of era would be on the horizon. However, toward 2010 he sensed the eruptions of what he called a “new historical horizon” and forcefully argued that the financial crisis of 2008 was no longer one of the cyclical crises of capitalism; it was something different, a shift in the colonial horizon of modernity.⁸³ Decoloniality and de-Westernization are the two trajectories, with much in common albeit with irreducible differences, that are bringing about the change of epoch. This argument, however, is a decolonial not a de-Western one. The disputes over the control of the CMP from the side of the US and for the liberation of it from the side of China is not a replica of the dispute between the US and the Soviet Union. There is a significant difference between, on the one hand, the confrontations between liberal/neoliberal capitalism and state communism during the Cold War and, on the other, the confrontations between neoliberal globalism and civilizational resurgences; or, in the expressions I use in this book, between re-Westernization and de-Westernization. What do I mean by “neoliberal globalism” and “civilizational resurgences”?

The Cold War involved the politics of either/or from both sides. Unsurprisingly, both sides acted on Western dichotomies: you are with me or with my enemies. Both actors in the contention operated on the foreign policy of alliances, by diplomacy or by force. With the Soviet Union gone, the foreign policy of alliance has been the weapon of the US. But China did not play that game. It delinked from it. Chinese foreign policy is of *partnership* instead of *alliance*.⁸⁴ An alliance means you have two choices, A versus B. That was also how Carl Schmitt conceived domestic policies. He defined the political as confrontations between friends and enemies.⁸⁵ We have experienced the consequences of the domestic politics of alliance during the Donald Trump presidency and internationally since George W. Bush and Dick Cheney invented and created the “terrorists.” Partnership, instead, means association in business rather than alliances and politics. You are not forced to do business with me, and I will not consider you an enemy if you do not. Responsibility is placed on the ethics of small and medium states: to engage in the politics of alliance or of partnership? That is the de-Western option, its opening to multipolarity and the resulting march of a change of epoch. Multipolarity could only be achieved through a politics of partnership in foreign policies. However, none of the existing nation-states are at this point willing or able to make this move. Decoloniality and the nation-state are strange bedfellows. The politics of partnership promoted by China is a significant factor in the change of epoch in international relations, while the decolonial politics of investigations is a marker of pluriversity in

the sphere of knowing, sensing, and being in the world. Both are initiating the advent of the third nomos of the earth (see chapter 14).

At this point, what are the movers of decoloniality at large, by which I mean the global proliferation of deeds and thoughts rejecting the coloniality of power, the explosions of the global politics of gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions? They include: the irreversible struggles to break the chains of gender heteronormativity and racial classifications and hierarchies, exposing white innocence and privileges; the growing awareness of the inadequacies of the modern nation-state, both in the place of its foundations and in the colonies where it was transplanted (by force or by a decision of the native population); the myriad publications, workshops, seminars, and blogs embracing decoloniality; the many debates calling into question the coloniality of universities and museums, and of biennial and triennial exhibits within but also beyond university and museum cloisters. All of these and more have the following in common: the *rejection* of established knowledge, of the regulation of knowing and sensing, and of the management of subjectivities to conform people's sensibilities, tastes, and orientations to one dominant, overarching, abstract universal.⁸⁶ Decoloniality did not emerge in academic intellectual circles of the North Atlantic but in the struggle for decolonization in the Third World, and entered the academy and North Atlantic intellectual circuits at the end of the twentieth century. Consequently, because the history of decoloniality that I outlined in section III.3, the politics of decolonial investigations is not, cannot, should not be limited to the academy although the academy is an important site to re-direct knowledges and the regulations of knowing (gnoseology) and sensing/believing (aesthesis). After all, universities and museums are factories of knowledge and sensing that regulate epistemology and aesthetics.⁸⁷

While universities and museums are two pillars of the coloniality of knowledge, the control of seeds and the uses of transgenic procedures, the exploitation of natural resources and the commodification of health, are distinct modalities of the colonialization of life, which implies the coloniality of knowledge and sensing. The coloniality of life in these three areas presupposes epistemic regulations that destitute the necessary balance of life without modified food, with access to pure air and clean water, and with healthy bodies in harmony with Earth and with the culture that the human species has created. Gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions have gigantic and hopeful tasks ahead to help to reconstitute communal horizons of living.

Beyond the two signposts of the coloniality of knowing and sensing, universities and museums, there are other areas in which decoloniality at large is

making its mark beyond and detached from the nation-state: actors involved in the sovereignty of food, local environmental movements, and local health care have been attentive to what decoloniality has to offer to basic areas of existence that have been transformed into commodities. And decolonial actors have been attentive to the trajectories of the Zapatistas⁸⁸ and the Peasant Way,⁸⁹ both organizations that are delinked from modern/colonial conventions of knowing and sensing and that have established their own ways (methods) to investigate what they need to know to advance their projects. In between these groups at one extreme and state and private universities at the other, the Global University for Sustainability, spearheaded by professor Lau Kin Chi from Lingnan University in Hong Kong, has conjoined the history of the institution-university with the knowing and sensing generated from praxes of living and doing rather than from disciplinary regulations.⁹⁰ What I propose in this book, building on Aníbal Quijano's groundbreaking vision of decoloniality as epistemic reconstitutions (which I render as gnoseological and aesthetic reconstitutions), has indirect relations with the state and faces strong opposition within the academy. Both "deficiencies" are convincing signs that the decolonial option is touching some chords that shall not be overlooked. I mentioned above the French intellectuals' manifesto revealing the increasing discomfort of right-wing academics with decoloniality at large.

All in all, while during the Cold War decolonization was a mixture of decolonial thinking and decolonial state politics, decoloniality after the Cold War has an overarching duty in the wide sphere of knowing, knowledge, sensing, and believing. Decolonial work at this point may not do much to change a world controlled by finances, technology, and interstate capitalism, whether re-Western or de-Western in politics, by an overwhelming presence of mass media, and by sophisticated military power associated with capitals, states, and technology. But decolonial work can and must have an irreplaceable task in shifting the ways that we, members of the human species, are and live in the world. With *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* I am aiming to add a grain of sand to the change of epoch and to the decolonial earthquake underway.