RITA SEGATO

Translated by RAMSEY McGLAZER

THE CRITIQUE OF COLONIALITY

Eight Essays

DECOLONIZING THE CLASSICS

"Segato's book must be read as a vaccine against the pandemic of authoritarianism and hatred, nurtured by sexism, racism, and colonialism."

Luiz Eduardo Soares

Decolonizing the Classics

Edited by Bernd Reiter, Texas Tech University

The critique of colonialism and post-colonialism has by now been broadly disseminated and understood. The logical next step in moving beyond colonialism in thought, research, and academic practice is to engage in decolonial efforts. This is currently occurring. However, most of these efforts are still based on the critique of Eurocentrism and its universalist claims.

Instead of adding another layer to this critique of Western and Northern intellectual domination and epistemological hegemony, Decolonizing the Classics actively inserts non-Western voices from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific into the canon of classic and seminal works currently taught around the globe.

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The Critique of Coloniality
Eight Essays
Rita Segato, Translated by Ramsey McGlazer

THE CRITIQUE OF COLONIALITY

Eight Essays

Rita Segato
Translated by Ramsey McGlazer

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GENDER AND COLONIALITY

From Communitarian to Colonial Modern Patriarchy[1]

A Responsive Anthropology: Toward a Critical Thought that Answers and that Makes Itself Available

In 2010, Aníbal Quijano organized an international symposium on "The Question of De/Coloniality and Global Crisis," held at the Universidad Ricardo Palma in Lima. The event brought decolonial thinkers together to discuss practices that go against the grain of the colonial order. Its theme was broad and so offered us freedom to respond in various ways. This chapter began as a response to Quijano's question, which I will reformulate this way: Where are gaps opening up today that might allow us to dismantle the coloniality of power, and how should we speak of these possibilities? What role do gender relations have in decolonial processes? The first part of my discussion will lead me later on back to the more particular theme that I was asked to address, in the context of the struggle for autonomy: the intersection between coloniality and patriarchy, and what follows from their convergence: colonial modern patriarchy and the coloniality of gender. I will turn to this problem in the second part of my discussion, after a brief overview of my contributions to and forms of participation in feminism and the indigenous movement, which together have allowed me to perceive how gender relations have been changed historically by colonialism and by the colonial episteme consolidated and persistently reproduced by republican states.

My chapter is organized according to the order of the findings that led me to my current understanding of the relations between coloniality and gender. At the same time, the chapter highlights the decolonial impulse of my scholarly practice. I am convinced that any other rhetorical strategy would result in the loss of my ability to communicate the understanding that I have undertaken to sketch out here: an understanding of gender relations in the context of colonial modernity.

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I proceed through ethnographic "listening." I am trained as an anthropologist—in other words, trained in a profession whose name, in some circles and some villages, has almost become an insult. This is because, more than any other discipline, anthropology embodies and emblematizes the distance and alienation that Santiago Castro Gómez has called "the hubris of the degree zero," even while today it finds itself engaged in a disciplinary retreat that verges on fundamentalism. So: how did decolonial theories find their way into my disciplinary, academic work?

Increasingly, I found myself using the anthropologist's tools in an inverted way, or rather in a way that led to what I came to think of a "responsive anthropology," an anthropology that produces knowledge and encourages reflection in response to questions addressed to it by those who would otherwise—that is, in classical anthropology—be the "objects" of observation and of study. I did this inadvertently at first and then began to theorize the process (Segato 2006).

In other words: my position as someone committed to the creation of a decolonial path today follows from the demands that were addressed to me, demands to which I sought to respond. I will refer here to two of these demands in order to introduce the problems that the chapter discusses, because over time these demands led me to an understanding of the set of relations structured by the colonial order. They required me to build the arguments and elaborate the concepts that could dismantle and deconstruct more established schemas and categories. They also caused certain terms to break down and to appear obsolete. Terms like "culture," "cultural relativism," "tradition," and "premodernity" were shown to be insufficient for grappling with these problems. I will not have much space here to detail the events that led to this progressive loss of a vocabulary. It will suffice instead to sketch out the results of my search for a new set of concepts that would permit me to develop arguments capable of responding to the demands that were presented to me.

It should be clear that the obsolescence of the words used by anthropologists and activists was not a matter of willfulness or whim, but rather one of necessity, imposed by the needs of the argument. I would like to note as well that my contribution to the symposium held in 2010 was different from my colleagues' contributions in that it was neither exegetical nor systematic, let alone programmatic. Instead it was practical. So too is this chapter offered as a theoretical argument committed to working toward the destruction of a belligerent practice.

Feminicide: A Symptom of the Barbarism of Modern Gender

In 2003 I was called on to think of ways to make intelligible the numerous extremely cruel murders of women taking place on Mexico's northern border. Today these crimes are known as femicides, and they represent a novelty, a contemporary transformation in gender violence, linked to new ways of waging war. Today humanity is bearing witness to a moment of dark innovation

in the means of brutalizing feminine and feminized bodies. This new form of brutalization is spreading and expanding without containment. Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico in Latin America, and the Republic of Congo in Africa, where the horrendous scenes of conflict in Rwanda continue, are emblematic of this new reality. In the Republic of Congo, doctors already use the category of "vaginal destruction" to describe the type of attack that often leads to the death of victims. In El Salvador, between 2000 and 2006, at the height of the period of "pacification," killings of men increased by 40% and killings of women nearly tripled, increasing by 111%. In Guatemala, again in a pattern associated with the reestablishment of democratic rights, between 1995 and 2004, killings of men increased by 68%, and killings of women doubled, increasing by 144%. In Honduras, the distance between the two rates of increase was even greater: between 2003 and 2007, killings of men increased by 40%, and killings of women were quadrupled, increasing by 166% (Carcedo 2010: 40–42). Attacks on the feminine take the form of both unprecedented bodily destruction and the trafficking and commodification of what these bodies can offer, taken to their limits. The predatory occupation of female and feminine bodies is practiced like never before, and in this apocalyptic age for humanity, it despoils these bodies to the point of leaving behind only their remains.

The demand that was addressed to me led me to note that cruelty and women's destitution were increasing as modernity and the market expanded and annexed new regions. Despite the juridical development that, since the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, has been known as "women's human rights," we can undoubtedly speak of the growing barbarism of modern gender, or of what some call "gender genocide." There is a false distinction between the rights of minors and so-called minorities—of boys, girls, and women—and indigenous peoples' right to difference. I consider these two questions in conjunction here, because they are analogous. This is a flashpoint right now in Brazil, one that calls for delicate conceptual maneuvers and considerable mental gymnastics, because it presents itself as an offensive to defend the lives of indigenous boys and girls but in fact threatens indigenous peoples' struggle for the right to build autonomy and pursue their own forms of justice. I am referring to a specific piece of proposed legislation that seeks to criminalize the adaptive, temporary, and declining practice of infanticide, a bill proposed by the evangelical front in Brazil's parliament. This draft legislation calls for supervision and surveillance by missionaries and agents of public safety who redouble the missionaries' capacity to intervene in village life. The latter loses its privacy and becomes transparent, accessible to the state's gaze. Again, in the colonial world, the supposed salvation of children is a key alibi for the forces who seek to intervene in the lives of indigenous peoples, accusing them of subjecting their own children to mistreatment.

The challenge, in this case, involved defending indigenous peoples' right to autonomy even though, in a context of coloniality, under the shelter of such

autonomy we find practices that are unacceptable to the Western and modern discourse of human rights, including for example the conscious elimination of defenseless lives. Undoubtedly, the light that shines on this practice—which is hardly representative of the lives of indigenous villages—is part of a powerful anti-relativist and anti-indigenous argument that seeks to disqualify and demoralize indigenous peoples in order to keep them dependent on the white world. So I received the call to collaborate in this struggle, helping to think of ways to defend societies accused of practicing infanticide or of not considering it a crime. On the basis of this call, as I will show, I came to see myself as compelled to construct a discourse that would entail recourse neither to relativism nor to understandings of culture and tradition that we habitually use to defend indigenous reality and indigenous peoples in Latin America. Nor does this argument depend on an appeal to the right to difference; instead, it points to the right to autonomy, defined as a principle that does not perfectly coincide with the right to difference, given that remaining different can never become a compelling, permanently binding rule for all spheres of life.

In the same way, my commitment to the defense of indigenous women against a violence that is increasing in both its frequency and the degree of its cruelty, a violence that victimizes them both in the white world and within their own homes, where it is wielded by men who are also indigenous, led me to collaborate with the committee for indigenous women of the Fundação Nacional do Índio (National Indian Foundation, or FUNAI) as this committee worked, beginning in 2006, to publicize the Maria da Penha Law against Domestic Violence.[2] This led me to confront a similar dilemma: how was it possible to seek recourse to state laws without ongoing dependency on a state that is persistently colonizing and whose historical project cannot coincide with the project of autonomy or the restoration of the communal fabric? It is contradictory to affirm the right to autonomy and at the same time to argue that the state produces laws that can defend those who are harmed within such autonomous regions.

The first thing that I argue in this connection is that the state here gives with one hand what it takes away with the other: it offers a law that defends women against the violence to which they are exposed because it has already broken the traditional institutions and the communal nexus that protected them. The advent of modernity gives rise to efforts to develop and apply modern antidotes to the very poison that modernity spreads. The modernizing function of the republican state—which is the direct descendant of overseas administration and is persistently colonizing and interventionist—weakens autonomies, intrudes into institutional life, rends the social fabric of communal life, generates dependency, and thus offers with one hand the modernity of a critical, egalitarian discourse while with the other it has already introduced the precepts of individualism and the instrumental modernity of a liberal and capitalist reason,

together with the racism that subjects non-white men to the stress of emasculation. I will return to these themes below.

An Embattled Anthropology: The Community against the State and the Law

The polemical question of indigenous infanticide, placed in the spotlight in a theater built in order to distract from indigenous aspirations for respect and autonomy, is paradigmatic of the dilemmas that the defense of the world of the village entails. The analysis of the quandaries that I confront as I evaluate and seek to protect and promote the world of the village as it faces the world of citizens has made it possible for me to speak of gender prior to the intrusion of colonial modernity. This context persists in the margins and folds of colonial modernity, in opposition to the world included in the ongoing expansion of nation-states, and thus the world incorporated into the canon of colonial modernity and universal citizenship.

The limit case of indigenous infanticide teaches us that in an environment dominated by the colonial episteme and hegemonized by the discourse of universal rights, there is no possibility left for defending autonomy in cultural terms, that is, in relativist terms and in terms of the right to difference. It is clearly impossible to organize a strategy for defending the restoration of autonomy to societies that have been interfered with and kept nearly concentrationary conditions for 500 years if the norms and practices of these societies contradict the laws of states in a field as sensitive as that of children's rights. It is for this reason that such fields are always chosen to illustrate the moral superiority and the rightness of the colonizer's civilizing mission. In other words, when we confront state domination and the construction of the universal discourse of human rights by the United Nations, it becomes strategically untenable to defend autonomy in terms of cultural relativism. To defend autonomy, it thus becomes necessary to abandon relativist arguments and the notion of a right to difference, substituting for these an argument that is sustained by what I have suggested we should call historical pluralism. The collective subjects of this plurality of histories are indigenous peoples with the deliberative autonomy to produce their own historical processes, even when they are in contact, as they have always been, with the processes of other peoples.

From this perspective, each people is seen not as different in its substantive, stable, and persisting patrimony or its consolidated episteme, but instead as a historical vector. Culture and cultural patrimony are in turn seen as decanted from historical processes, the sediments of an accumulated historical experience that remains in motion. The cumulative character of this sediment can be seen in what we take to be habits, customs, and understandings that seem to be settled and repetitive and that the anthropological concept of culture captures, stabilizes, and defines as an object of disciplinary observation. But

every ethnographer who has returned to the field ten years later knows that this appearance of stability is nothing more than a mirage, and that habits and customs are nothing other than history in process.

In this way, we can see that customs can be changed and in fact are constantly modified, because the persistence of a people does not depend on the repetition of its practices or the immobility of its ideas. We can thus loosen the ties that bind together identities without dispensing with these altogether; we can instead refer to peoples as historical vectors, as the collective agents of historical projects who perceive themselves as coming from a shared past and constructing a shared future through a shared story—not one without conflicts of interest or antagonisms at the level of ethical sensibility or politics, but still a shared history. This perspective leads us to replace the phrase "a culture" with "a people," where the latter refers to a living subject of history, in the midst of articulations and exchanges that constitute an inter-historicity rather than an interculturality. What defines this collective subject, this people, is not a stable cultural patrimony, with a set of fixed contents, but rather a sense that its members share a history in common, that they come from a shared past and are headed toward a shared future, even while they confront situations of internal disagreement and conflict.

So, what is a people? A people is a project, an effort to be a history. When the history that they weave—like a tapestry whose threads form figures that sometimes approach one another or converge and at other times distance themselves from or oppose one another—is interrupted by the force of an intervention from without, this collective subject will seek to take these threads up again, to make small knots in the fabric, to stich the threads of memory back together again, and to persist. In this case, we see what we could call a restoration of history, a restitution of this people's capacity to create its own historical path, returning to the interrupted delineation of figures, weaving them into the present and projecting them into the future.

In cases like these, what is the best role that the state can play? Despite the persistently colonial character of its relations to the territory that it administers, a good state, far from being one that imposes its own law, will be one that restores jurisdictions and communal autonomies, ensuring the conditions for internal deliberation, restricted for reasons related to the state's own intervention and administration, as I will explain below in my discussion of gender more specifically. The decolonial break that can be fought for within the matrix of the state will be opened precisely through the restoration of autonomous jurisdictions and guarantees of deliberation, which is nothing other than the restoration of each people's history and capacity to pursue its own historical project.

I set aside relativist arguments here, without sacrificing the methodological procedure that allows us to understand the other's point of view by relativizing it. I set such arguments aside strategically and even despite the fact that they have been instrumentalized by indigenous peoples themselves, though

this has led to some perverse consequences that I will discuss below. The relativist argument should give way to a historical argument, an argument that each people should have its own history. This is also an argument for what I have called historical pluralism, which is nothing other than a non-culturalist version of relativism, but one that avoids the fundamentalist tendency that inheres in every form of culturalism. Rather than a fixed cultural horizon, each people weaves its history through debate and internal deliberation, digging in the breaches created by the inconsistencies in its own cultural discourse, making its own contradictions generative, and choosing between alternatives that are already present and that are activated by the circulation of ideas coming from the surrounding world, in interaction with and as existing within the universe of the nation, defined as an alliance between peoples. (On the internal discourse as a resource for the transformation of customs, see Anna'im 1995.) In a limit case that threatens the village with the inevitability of supervision and surveillance by agents of the state and religion, the only viable strategy was to replace cultural relativism with an argument that could be fully defended in terms of historical pluralism, which always entails exposure to influences by and exchanges with other historicities.

For this reason, I want to be clear that these were dilemmas that arose in a very complex context, one that called for the setting to work of an *embattled anthropology*. These dilemmas led me to suggest the terms I have defined here: rather than cultures, peoples as the subjects of a history; rather than cultural relativism, historical pluralism; and inter-historicity rather than interculturality. These terms allow us to think and act in ways that are more adequate to a critical and liberatory project. It was not my aim to introduce innovations or neologisms for their own sake; this was not what led me to introduce these terms. Nor am I suggesting that the terms thus set aside should be eliminated from our vocabularies; instead they should be used with caution so that they do not encourage culturalism, with its tendency to lead to fundamentalism, which neither disciplinary self-criticism nor activism have been able to dismantle.

The World of the State and the World of the Village

A question thus arises: After the long process of European colonization, the establishment of the order of coloniality, and the subsequent consolidation of the modern order by the republics many of them as cruel or crueler than the overseas colonizers themselves, how could the state now suddenly retreat? Although coloniality is a matrix that hierarchically orders the world in a stable fashion, this matrix has its own history. There is, for instance, not only a history of the establishment of the coloniality of power, the colonial episteme, and race as a classifying system, but also a history of race *within* this episteme. There is also a history of relations of gender within patriarchy. Both race and gender respond to the extension of the modernizing state's tentacles, as this

state intervenes with its institutions, on the one hand, and with the market, on the other, disarticulating and tearing at the social fabric, bringing chaos and introducing a profound disorder into all the structures that exist within these territories, each with its own cosmos. One of the distortions that results from this process is, as I will try to show, the aggravation and intensification of the hierarchies that were part of these communities before the colonial intrusion. Once this disorder is introduced, is it possible to seriously believe that the state could suddenly withdraw?

The prior order—the order before the colonial intrusion—becomes a fragmentary fold in the social fabric that manages to preserve some features of the world that preceded the colonial intervention in the world of the village. We do not have words that are fully adequate to this world, which we should not call pre-modern lest we suggest that it simply resides in a state before modernity, moving toward modernity inevitably. Such worlds, such realities, continued to change together with and alongside the world marked by colonial modernity. But after they came into contact with the influence of the colonizing process, a process that was first metropolitan and then republican, they were damaged in a fundamental way: the hierarchies already contained within them—basically hierarchies of caste, of status, and of gender defined as a type of status—were exacerbated and rendered perverse and much more authoritarian.

Is there any way to dwell within the matrix of such a state in a decolonial fashion, inducing it to help with the reconstitution of communities? Is it possible to turn the state into a restorative state, one that restores the autonomies within itself and returns to indigenous peoples their own histories? Here I offer this as a question first and foremost, and a question addressed to the situation in which we live, which can be described as a way of living between worlds, because the only things that really exist are intermediary situations, interfaces, and transitions between the reality of the state and the world of the village, between the colonial modern order and the prior or pre-intrusion order. These situations involve various kinds of intersections between benign and malign influences; they are worlds that combine the regressive and conservative, on the one hand, and the progressive, on the other. They attest to modernity's baleful infiltration of communities and to its beneficial infiltration of communities. They attest to the community's baleful infiltration of modernity and also to its beneficial infiltration of modernity.

I am referring to the fact that when the village is invaded by instrumental modernity, the precepts of the market, and some features of representative democracy, which then coopt communal forms of leadership, the world-between-worlds that results is destructive. But when the modern discourse of equality and historical reason circulates within the village, the world-between-worlds that results is beneficial, because it tends toward the generalization of happiness. On the other hand, when the village, with its order of status hierarchies and its familialist solidarities, penetrates the modern public sphere,

this sphere is damaged, since the process leads to the creation of corporate and kinship networks that cut across public space. By contrast, when communal solidarity influences and inflects the modern order, it improves this order by making it more beneficial.

One function of the state might therefore be, as I noted above, that of restoring to indigenous peoples their internal autonomy and the weaving of their own history, the history that was expropriated by the colonial process and the order of colonial modernity. Such a state would at the same time promote the circulation of the egalitarian discourse of modernity within the lives of communities. In this way it would contribute to the healing of a social fabric torn apart by coloniality, and to the re-establishment of collective forms of life, with less authoritarian and perverse hierarchies and powers than those that resulted from the hybrids formed between the communal and the colonial, then later the republican, orders.

Let me note in passing that there are also world-between-worlds in the blood, at the level of *mestizaje*, and these can likewise go both ways. There is a world-between-worlds of *mestizaje* ideologically defined as whitening, as the sequestering of non-white blood within "whiteness," its cooptation by a process of ongoing dilution that subsumes the traces of the black and the Indian within a whitened, creole Latin America. And there is another world-between-worlds, defined in the opposite sense, or what we could call a process of blackening: a process in which white blood joins and contributes to non-white blood in the reconstruction of the indigenous and Afro-descendant worlds, collaborating in their demographic reconstitution. These two understandings of *mestizaje* are distinctly ideological, since the biology in question is the same in both. Clearly, though, they correspond to opposed historical projects. In the second of these, *mestizaje* begins to be reformulated, redefined as the way in which people with non-white blood negotiated centuries of hiding. It entered and sought refuge within white blood before reemerging in the present, after a prolonged period of concealment, with the reemergence of indigenous peoples that Latin America is currently witnessing. The *mestizo* thus comes to be perceived as carrying the history of the Indian within (Segato 2010a).

Duality and Binarism: The "Egalitarian" Gender Relations of Colonial Modernity and the Hierarchies of the Pre-Intrusion World

Here I will discuss a specific form of infiltration: the infiltration of the gender relations within the world of the village by the gender relations of the colonial modern order. Julieta Paredes has identified something similar with her idea of an intersection or "conjuncture of patriarchies" (2010). Here it is crucial to understand that by comparing the colony's and later the republican state's intrusion into other worlds to the order of colonial modernity and its canons

of citizenship, we not only shed light on the world of the village, but also and especially understand dimensions of republics and the regime of rights that often remain opaque, dimensions that are hidden by the system of civic and republican beliefs by which we are surrounded, that is, by the civic religion of our world. I would also like to note that the analysis of what differentiates one world's understanding of gender from another's clearly reveals the contrast between their forms of life in general, that is, in all spheres and not only in the realm of gender. This is because relations of gender, although they are treated as "particular questions" in sociological and anthropological discourse, are ubiquitous and even omnipresent in all social life.

I therefore seek to read the interface between two worlds, the pre-intrusion world and the world of colonial modernity, from the point of view of transformations in the gender system. That is, this is not merely a matter of introducing gender as one more theme in decolonial critique, or as one aspect of domination in the order of coloniality. It is instead a matter of granting gender a real theoretical and epistemological status, of treating it as a central category that can illuminate other aspects of the transformation that was imposed on communities when they were captured by the new colonial modern order.

In my view, this discussion contributes to a very recent debate. In order to situate my intervention within this debate, I should first identify three strands within feminist thought. First, Eurocentric feminism argues that the problem of gender domination, or patriarchal domination, is universal. This feminism does not make further distinctions and, in the name of unity, it instead points to the possibility of bestowing the advances of modernity on non-white, indigenous, and black women and to colonized continents.

This feminism thus assigns European or Euro-centered women a position of moral superiority, authorizing their interventions and their civilizing, colonial, modernizing missions. This position is also inevitably ahistorical and even anti-historical because it encloses history within the extremely slow, almost stagnant time of patriarchy, and it occludes the radical distortion introduced by the entry of colonial-modern time into the history of gender relations. As I noted above, although race and gender were installed through different epistemic ruptures—in the era of coloniality in the case of race and the history of the species in the case of gender—they remain historical, bringing earlier histories with them into the epistemes that result.

A second feminist position, at the other extreme, is espoused by critics including María Lugones and also Oyeronke Oyewumi, who argue that gender did not exist in the pre-colonial world (Lugones 2007). In 2003, I published a critical analysis (published in English in 2008) of Oyeronke's 1997 book, which I read in light of one of my own texts from 1986 that showed the same perplexity in its response to gender in the context of Yoruba civilization but that reached different conclusions (see Segato 1986 and 2005).

A third position, which I espouse here, is supported by a great deal of historical and ethnographic evidence that indisputably points to the existence of gendered terms in tribal Amerindian, African, and New Guinean societies. This third position identifies a form of patriarchal organization in indigenous and Afro-American societies, different from the Western gender system, that could be described as a low-intensity patriarchy. At the same time, those who argue for this position maintain that the prevailing, Eurocentric feminist position is neither efficacious nor accurate. This third position's adherents include the feminist thinkers associated with the struggle in Chiapas, a paradigmatic context for the resolution of tensions resulting from women's dual participation in indigenous struggles and women's struggles for better living conditions. Indigenous women frequently denounce the blackmail that they face from indigenous authorities, who pressure them to defer their own demands as women because of the risk that such demands for resources and rights will lead to the fragmentation of their communities (Gutiérrez and Palomo 1999; Cal y Mayor 2002; Hernández Castillo 2003; and Hernández and Sierra 2005).

Women, both indigenous and African American (see, for example, Williams and Pierce 1996), who have acted and reflected in the context of struggles find themselves divided between, on the one hand, loyalty to their communities and peoples in their confrontations with external forces, and, on the other, a commitment to the internal struggle against the forms of oppression from which they suffer within these same communities and as members of these same peoples. These women have frequently denounced the blackmail exercised by indigenous authorities, who pressure them by claiming that the demands that they make as women risk fragmenting their communities, threatening their cohesion, rendering them more vulnerable in their struggles for resources and rights. The feminist scholars whom I have just cited have answered these charges.

Meanwhile, documentary, historical, and ethnographic evidence from the tribal world attests to the existence of structures of difference that are recognizable, similar to what we call relations of gender in modernity, with clear hierarchies of prestige that separate masculinity and femininity, embodied respectively by figures who can be understood as men and women. Despite the recognizable nature of the positions that it assigns, this world also contains more frequent openings that allow for the passage out of and movement between positions, whereas such passages and movements are prohibited in the modern Western world. As is known, indigenous peoples including the Warao in Venezuela, the Cuna in Panama, the Trio in Surinam, the Javaés in Brazil, and the Incans in the pre-Columbian world, among other peoples including a number of Native American peoples in the United States and First Nations in Canada, as well as all Afro-descendant religious groups, include languages and allow for practices that transgress stabilized categories of gender. These include marriage between persons who in the West would be understood to be of the same sex, and forms of gender transitivity that would be blocked by

the Western gender system and absolutely ruled out by colonial modernity. (For a list of transgender identities in historical and contemporary societies, see Campuzano 2009a: 76.) Two classical ethnographic accounts of this aspect of indigenous societies in Latin America are Pierre Clastres's article "The Bow and the Basket" (1969), on gender among the Aché Indians of Paraguay, and Peter Rivière's monograph *Marriage Among the Trio* (1969). Both of these texts significantly precede the decolonial literature.

In the pre-intrusion world, we can also recognize the features of an understanding of masculinity that has been with humanity throughout the history of the species; what I call "the patriarchal prehistory of humanity" is characterized by a very slow temporality, that is a *longue durée* that is so long as to be confused with evolutionary time (Segato 2003b). This form of masculinity is built by a subject who is compelled to acquire it as a status, undergoing trials and confronting death in the process—as in the Hegelian allegory of lordship and bondage. Throughout his life, this subject bears the weight of an imperative to comport himself—time and again, and in the eyes of his peers—in a way that proves and repeatedly confirms his capacities for resistance, aggressivity, domination, and the accumulation of what I have called forms of "feminine tribute" (ibid.). In this way, he displays the set of powers—military, political, sexual, intellectual, economic, and moral—that allows him to be recognized and addressed as a masculine subject.

This indicates, on the one hand, that gender exists in such worlds, albeit in a different form from the one found in modernity. On the other hand, it indicates that when this colonial modernity comes into contact with the understanding of gender found in indigenous villages, it dangerously modifies that understanding. It intervenes in the villages' structure of relations, capturing and reorganizing these relations from within, maintaining the appearance of continuity while in fact transforming their meanings as it introduces an order governed by different norms. It is for this reason that I refer to forms of "resemblance" or verisimilitude: the terms referring to gender remain the same, but they are reinterpreted in light of the new modern order. This convergence is truly fatal, because a language that was hierarchical, when it comes into contact with the egalitarian discourse of modernity, becomes super-hierarchical for the reasons that I will examine in what follows. These include a hyperinflation of masculinity in the communal context, where men act as intermediaries who bring the world of the village into contact with the outside world, that is, with the world of white administration; the emasculation of men in the extra-communal context, where they confront white administrators; the hyper-inflation and universalization of the public sphere, already ancestrally inhabited by men; the collapse and privatization of the domestic sphere; the becoming-binary of dualities, resulting in the universalization of the binary terms that oppose the realm understood as private to the realm understood as public.

The village was always organized by status, divided into spaces that were clearly distinguished and governed by rules of their own, with different forms of prestige and hierarchical order; it was always inhabited by people assigned roles that could be understood very generally to correspond to those of men and women in modernity. These were also people marked by gender as by a sort of destiny related to the distribution of spaces, labor, and rituals. But despite being egalitarian, the discourse of colonial modernity—as many feminists have noted—hides an abyssal gap resulting from what we can here tentatively call the progressive totalization of the public sphere or the totalitarianism of the public sphere. It is even possible to argue that it is the public sphere that continues and entrenches the colonizing process today. We can shed light on this idea by referring to Carole Paterman's notion of the "sexual contract," and showing that the sexual contract is exposed in the world of the village, whereas in colonial modernity it is disguised by the language of contractual citizenship.

Let me illustrate this claim with an example of what happened when we traveled with the women's committee of the FUNAI to villages to speak to indigenous women about the problem of increasing violence against them. News of this problem had reached Brasilia. What happened—in general, but especially in areas where the forms of life considered "traditional" were supposedly better preserved and where there was more awareness of the value of autonomy in relation to the state, as is the case for the residents of Parque Xingú in the state of Mato Grosso—was that chiefs and men would be present and intervene in the meetings, arguing that the state should have nothing to do with or to say to their women. They supported this argument by making the plausible claim that their world "was always this way": "the control that we exercise over our women is the control that we have always had over them." And they supported this claim in turn with a culturalist and thus fundamentalist argument of the kind that I referred to above. According to such an argument, culture has no history. Arlette Gautier calls this historical myopia "the invention of customary law" (Gautier 2005: 697).

My response to such claims, which was complex to be sure, took the following form: "in part yes, and in part no." Because if there had always been a hierarchy in the world of the village, a difference in prestige between men and women, there was also another kind of difference, one that was now threatened by the interference of a colonizing republican public sphere. Circulating a discourse of equality, such a public sphere also relegates difference to a marginal and problematic position; it creates the problem of the "other," expels the other thus defined as a "problem." This shift introduced by the village's annexation, first under the aegis of the overseas colonial administration and later by the management of the state, which is still colonial, leads to the formation of a first symptom: the cooptation of men, the members of the class ancestrally assigned tasks and roles in public space before the colonial intrusion.

To engage in deliberation on communal village lands, to leave on hunting expeditions and come into contact with the residents of other villages, whether neighboring or distant, whether members of the same people or of other peoples, to converse with or wage war against these people: all of these were ancestrally male tasks. And for this reason, from the perspective of the village, the agents of successive colonial administrations were added to this list: the list of those with whom one conversed or engaged in debate or negotiated or signed agreements, or those against whom one waged war, or, recently, those from whom one obtained resources and rights (understood as resources) that could be claimed in an age of identity politics. The ancestral position of masculinity was thus gradually transformed by this relational role that men came to play, by their contact with the powerful agents who produced and reproduced coloniality. The colonizers fought wars against men and negotiated with men, and the colonial modern state did the same. For Gautier, this choice of men as privileged interlocutors was deliberate and functional for the project of colonization and its efficiency as an instrument of control: "Colonization entailed a radical loss of political power for women, where they had it, whereas the colonizers negotiated with or invented certain masculine structures in order to secure allies" (2005: 718). They also promoted the "domestication" of women, their relegation and subjection, in an effort to facilitate the colonial enterprise (ibid.: 690 ff; see also Assis Climaco 2009).

The masculine position was thus shifted and promoted, made into a new position distanced from the feminine. These processes were hidden from view by the old terms, even while the masculine position was strengthened by men's privileged access to resources and knowledge of the world of power. This position was thus repositioned, while a rupture in and reconstitution of the old order took place; the old names, signs, and rituals were kept, but filled with new contents. Men return to villages secure in their sense of being what they have always been, while hiding what now operates differently. Here we could refer to the famous and evergreen metaphor of *body snatching*, as in the classic Hollywood film *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), where body snatching is also "the perfect crime" in Baudrillard's sense, because it is successfully hidden behind a false analogy or form of verisimilitude: the appearance of resemblance.

Here we confront a cast of characters in another drama, or one captured by another grammar. Women and the village itself become objects under the masculine gaze, a gaze now infected with the diseases of distance and exteriority, diseases proper to the exercise of power in the world of coloniality, transmitted through contact and mimesis. Men's position now becomes at once interior and exterior; it is endowed with the exteriority and objectifying capacity of the colonial gaze, at once administering and pornographic. Very schematically, because I cannot elaborate at length here, I want to note that sexuality is also transformed by the introduction of a previously unknown form of morality, which reduces women's bodies to the status of objects and at the same time

introduces the notions of sin, heinous crimes, and all their corollaries. We should attribute to colonial modern exteriority—the exteriority of scientific rationality, the exteriority of administration, and the exteriority that seeks to eliminate the other and difference, all identified by Aníbal Quijano and Walter Mignolo in their work—the pornographic character that I attribute to the colonizing gaze (Quijano 1992; Mignolo 2003 [2000]: 290–291 and 424).

I should note, however, that together with this hyperinflation of the masculine position within the village, an emasculation of these same men occurs in their confrontations with the white world, which subjects them to stress and reminds them of the relativity of their masculinity by also subjecting them to the sovereign dominion of the colonizer. This process generates violence, because it oppresses here even while it empowers men in the village, compelling them to reproduce and repeatedly exhibit the capacity for control that inheres in the masculine subject position in the only place that they can do so, in an effort to restore the virility damaged in their confrontations with the external world. This is true of the whole universe of racialized masculinity, expelled from whiteness and relegated to the condition of non-whiteness by the order of coloniality.

The claim that patriarchy did not exist in pre-colonial societies thus cannot be sustained, since pre-colonial men were already divided in their loyalties. They were loyal at once to the patriarchal code, which obliged them to bow down before the winner and abide by his rules, and to their peoples, their families, communities, and cultures. In this sense, we can argue that the presence of a patriarchal pre-colonial rule made men vulnerable to colonial intrusion and opened the door to colonization. As the anthropologist Ruth Landes argued in a text that has long since been forgotten, in wars of conquest, men are the losers (1953).

Another feature of the process by which pre-colonial gender is captured by modern gender involves the sequestering of all politics—that is, all forms of deliberation on the common good—within the republican public sphere. This also leads to the privatization of the domestic sphere, to the othering, marginalization, and expropriation of all political tasks that previously took place there. Bonds between women, which led to reciprocity and solidary collaboration both in the performance of rituals and the completion of productive and reproductive tasks, are now undone as domesticity is enclosed in and redefined as "private life." For domestic spaces and those who inhabit them, this means nothing more and nothing less than the disintegration of their value and political power, that is, their capacity to take part in the decisions that affect the whole collectivity.

The consequences of this breaking of the bonds between women—and of the political alliances that such bonds permit and promote—are literally fatal, because this process makes women ever more vulnerable to masculine violence, which is in turn worsened by the stress caused by the pressures placed on men

by the external world. The compulsory confinement of domestic space and its inhabitants, women as safeguards of the private, has terrible consequences, sustaining the violence that targets women. It is crucial to understand that these consequences are fully modern and the products of modernity, and to recall that the process of modernization that is still persistently expanding is also a process of permanent colonization.

Thus just as genocide is, in its rationality and systematicity, a product of modern times, femicide, defined as the almost machine-like practice of exterminating women, is a modern invention. This is the barbarism of colonial modernity that I mentioned earlier. Impunity, as I have tried to show elsewhere, is related to the privatization of domestic space, as a residual space that is not included within the sphere of broader questions thought to be of general public interest (Segato 2010b). With the emergence of the modern grid of categories used by the state, politics, the discourse of rights, and science, both the domestic sphere and woman, who inhabits it, become mere remnants, marginal to the affairs considered universally relevant and the perspectives considered neutral.

For many peoples in the Amazon and Gran Chaco regions, there are precise rules governing feminine participation and speech in the public spaces of the village, where the prerogative of deliberation is reserved for men. But, as is well known, these men suspend tribal assemblies and deliberations at sunset, often in a highly ritual fashion, without arriving at any conclusions, in order to engage in nighttime consultations within their domestic spaces. The deliberations only resume the next day with support from the world of women, who only speak at home. If this kind of consultation does not take place, the penalties for men are severe. All of this is customary and takes place within a world that is clearly compartmentalized. Here, although there is a public space and a domestic space, politics, defined as a set of deliberations that lead to decisions that affect collective life, cuts across both spaces. In the Andean world, the authority of the *mallkus* is always dual; although their internal organization may be hierarchical, they include a masculine leader and a feminine leader, and all communal deliberations are attended by women, who sit beside their husbands or in groups outside the enclosures in which deliberations take place; from here they send signals of their approval or disapproval during the course of the unfolding debate. If this is the case, then in such worlds there is no monopoly on public space and its activities of the kind that we find in the colonial modern world. On the contrary, domestic space is endowed with politicality, in that the consultations that take place there are obligatory and because it marks the place where women come together as a collective to form a feminine front.

Gender, governed in this way, constitutes a hierarchical duality, in the sense that both of the terms that make it up, masculine and feminine, are ontologically and politically complete, despite the fact that they are unequal. In the world of modernity, there is no duality but instead binarism. Whereas dualities involve relations of complementarity, binary relations are supplementary: one

term supplements, rather than complements, the other. When one of these terms becomes the "universal," that is, the representative of the general, what was hierarchical becomes abyssal, and the second term becomes a remainder. This is a binary structure, different from the dual.

In the colonial modern order, which is a binary one, any element must be made equivalent—that is, made measurable by the grid of reference or universal equivalent—in order to attain ontological fullness or completeness, the fullness or completeness of being. This has the effect of making any manifestation of otherness into a problem that can only cease to be a problem when it is filtered through the equalizing grid that neutralizes particularities and idiosyncrasies. The Indian other, the non-white other, or the woman cannot fully adapt to the neutral, aseptic environment of the universal equivalent—that is, what can be generalized and endowed with universal value and interest—unless they are cleansed of their difference or exhibit a form of difference that has been made commensurable with the terms of an identity that is recognizable within the global order. In the modern world, only subjects (individual or collective) and questions that can somehow be processed, translated, and reformulated in the universal terms and transported into the "neutral" space of the republican subject—the place where the universal citizen-subject speaks—are endowed with political capacities. Everything that is left over in or left out of this process, everything that cannot be converted into or made commensurate with the grid, is a remainder.

Nevertheless, as others have already shown, there is a subject native to this space, this modern agora; he is the one and only subject capable of traversing it neutrally for this reason. This subject created the rules of citizenship in his own image and likeness, giving rise to it from a place of exteriority and shaping it in a process that was first military and then ideological. He has the following characteristics: he is male, white, and a paterfamilias—and therefore at least functionally heterosexual—as well as propertied and literate. Anyone who would exercise his capacity for citizenship must find a way to conform to this profile, through politicization defined as the rendering public of identity, since the public is the only realm that is politically potent in modernity. (On these dynamics, see Warner 1990; West 2000 (1988); Young 2000; Cornell 1998 (1998); Benhabib 2006 (1992).)

Dualism—as in the case of gender dualism in the indigenous world—is one variant of the multiple; or rather, in this context the two condenses and epitomizes a multiplicity. Binarism, which is proper to colonial modernity, results from an episteme that eliminates, that produces exteriority; it belongs to the world of the One. The one and the two within indigenous dualities are some of the many possibilities of the multiple; here the one and the two, although they can function complementarily, are ontologically complete and endowed with politicality despite being unequal in their value and prestige. The second term in this hierarchical duality is not a problem in need of conversion or

correction or processing through the grid of equivalence; nor is it the remainder of the transposition of the One. Instead it is fully other, a complete and irreducible other.

In order to understand this, we must also understand that the domestic space is, in this context, whole and complete, with its own politics, its own associations. These are hierarchically inferior to associations in public space, to be sure, but they can defend themselves and have the capacity to transform themselves. We could say that gender relations in this world take the form of a *low-intensity patriarchy*, unlike the patriarchal relations imposed by colonialism and consolidated in colonial modernity. Without entering into the details here, I will underscore the well-known failures of the gender equality initiatives of prestigious programs for international cooperation; these failures result precisely from the fact that the programs bring a universalist gaze to bear, and they proceed from a Eurocentric definition of "gender" and gender relations. In other words, the fragility of such initiatives that seek to promote cooperation results from their lack of awareness of the categories proper to the contexts for which they are formulated. In rural communities and indigenous villages, society is dual, and this duality organizes spaces, tasks, and the distribution of rights and responsibilities. This duality defines gendered communities or collectivities. This means that the general social fabric is divided into parts, the community into groups with their own norms and ways of living together and forms of association, both for productive and reproductive tasks and for ceremonial purposes.

In general, the projects and initiatives that involve the technical cooperation of European countries point to the difficulty of perceiving the specificity of gender in the communal contexts in which they are realized. As a result, projects and initiatives that relate to gender and that seek to promote gender equality are addressed and applied to persons, that is, to individual women, or to the relations between individual women and individual men. The result sought is the direct and immediate promotion of gender equality, defined as equality between persons rather than between spheres. Designed so that they focus on individuals, such initiatives that seek to promote gender equity do not proceed from an understanding of context-responsive action, which in the communal context would require the promotion of the domestic sphere and the collective of women as a whole as they confront the hierarchy of prestige and the power of public space and the collective of men. In fact, these projects should aim to promote equality between the collectives of men and the collectives of women within communities. Only this form of equality could lead later to the emergence of prominent women who would not distance themselves from their communities of origin, that is, who would persistently return to and act within the group.

The other mistake made by programs that seek to foster international cooperation as well as by public policies and NGOs follows from their understanding

of transversality and the strategy that derives from the effort to practice a transversal politics in order to redress the hierarchical nature of gender relations. The other mistake that I have just identified resulted from the Eurocentric tendency to see gender relations in the world of the village as relations between individual women and men, and the inability to understand that these relations are a matter of hierarchies between gendered groups, that is, a matter of inequality between the spheres into which the community is divided. The mistaken understanding of transversality is based on the assumption that there are dimensions of communal life that are of universal interest—the economy, social organization, political life, and so on—and others that are of particular or partial interest—domestic life, or what happens between women, or women's affairs. The effort to create a transversal gender politics is thus based on the erroneous notion, examined above, that in the village the public is a space for universal values, that is, that the public in this context is equivalent to the public sphere as it is defined in the colonial modern order, and that the domestic is a particular, private, and intimate realm. This notion establishes a hierarchy between the two realms. As a result, what is "transversalized" is what is thought to be of only partial or particular interest, and what is seen as appended onto the affairs thought to be central and of universal interest. This is, like the other mistake that I have just discussed, a Eurocentric projection of the structure of modern institutions onto the institutions of the world of the village. To seek to "transversalize" particular or partial interests, including gendered interests, by introducing them into supposedly universal problems: this effort becomes a problem as soon as it comes into contact with the reality of worlds that do not conform to the social organization of the modern West, worlds that are not organized by Eurocentric and colonial binarisms. In the world of the village, although it is endowed with more prestige, the political sphere is not universal but rather, like the domestic sphere, a space of partiality. Both spaces are, again, understood to be ontologically complete.

In addition to identifying the individualism inherent in the state perspective and in both state-led and international programs, I would like to note that the modern world is the world of the One, where all forms of otherness that deviate from the universal order represented by this One are seen as problems. The discipline of anthropology itself offers proof of this, since it is born under the cover of the modern conviction that others must be explained, their languages translated, made commensurate, processed by the rational operations that assign them places on the universal grid. Anything that cannot be placed on this grid is left over and left out; is not endowed with the weight of reality or with ontological fullness. It is discounted as incomplete and irrelevant. Derridean deconstruction, which destabilizes binary pairs, cannot accommodate or give an account of duality.

With the transformation of the dualism, defined as a variant of the multiple, into the binarism made up of the universal, canonical, "neutral" One and its

other—the remainder, residue, surplus, anomaly, or margin—exits and passages are closed off. Possibilities for circulation among positions are foreclosed as well as all positions are colonized by the logic of the binary. Gender is cast, as in the West, within the heterosexual matrix, and rights become necessary as protections against homophobia. So, too, do policies for the promotion of equality and sexual freedom, like same-sex marriage, prohibited in colonial modernity but accepted by a wide range of indigenous peoples in Latin America. (I described this difference between worlds in an article published in 1986 on the communities in Recife practicing the Afro-Brazilian religion of Nagô Yoruba [Segato 1986].) Giuseppe Campuzano has studied the pressures that the colonizer brought to bear on the diverse forms of sexuality encountered in the Inca empire, as attested in chronicles and other documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Campuzano 2006, 2009a, and 2009b, among others). These sources also attest to the constant pressure exerted by the norms and punitive threats that sought to capture indigenous practices within the conquistador's heterosexual binary, which led to the imposition of notions of sin that were foreign to the world that he encountered. It also caused the pornographic gaze to spread.

This allows us to conclude that many of the forms of moral harm that are today thought to be matters of "custom" or "tradition"—those that the tools of human rights seek to combat—are in fact *modern* harms, customs, and traditions. That is, they are native to the order that was established by colonial modernity. For example, the supposed "custom" of homophobia is, like other supposed customs, modern. Here again, then, we are dealing with a legal antidote produced by modernity to counter the harms that this modernity itself has introduced and that it continues to propagate.

The hardening of identity positions is also one of the features of the racialization established by the modern colonial process, which places subjects in fixed positions within binary orders—in this case, the white/non-white binary. (On the co-emergence of the colony, modernity, and capitalism together with the categories of "Europe," "America," "race," the "Indian," the "white," and the "black," see Quijano 1991, 2000; and Quijano and Wallerstein 1992.)

Another unfortunate part of this process is the rearrangement of the cosmos and the earth so that all beings, both animate and inanimate, can be made to fit within the binary relation between subject and object proper to Western science. In this new situation—new and ongoing for many peoples still exposed to a persistent and daily process of conquest and colonization—the struggle for rights and inclusive public policies that promote equity are proper to the modern world. This does not mean that we should oppose them; instead it means that we should understand the paradigm to which they belong and especially that living in a decolonial way means seeking to open breaches within a territory that has been totally colonized by a binary system, which is possibly the most efficient tool that power wields.

For this reason, I said to the Indigenous women with whom I was in conversation during the workshops on the Maria da Penha Law against Domestic Violence organized by FUNAI's Working Group on Gender and Generation: the state gives you with one hand what it has already taken away with the other. When the world of binary structures, the world of the One and the rest, comes into contact with the world of the multiple, it captures the latter world and modifies it from within, in ways that are in keeping with the coloniality of power. This then allows the world of the One to exercise a more powerful influence over the world of the multiple, or rather, to colonize it.

In this new, dominant order, public space in turn captures and monopolizes all deliberations and decisions that pertain to the general common good, and domestic space as such is totally depoliticized. This happens both because of the loss of ancestral forms of participation in public space and because the nuclear family is now cloistered within the space of privacy. New, imperative forms of conjugality come to regulate the family, ruling out the more extensive bonds that used to course through domestic space (Abu-Lughod 2002; Maia 2010). This weakens the communal gaze that used to monitor and judge behaviors. The depoliticization of domestic space then makes it vulnerable and fragile, and innumerable accounts attest to the new degrees and cruel forms of victimization that emerge when the protection of the communal gaze is withdrawn from the world of the family. In this way, the authority, value, and prestige of women and their sphere all collapse.

This critique of the fall of the domestic sphere and the world of women—of their fall, that is, from a position of ontological plenitude to the status of the surplus or remainder of the real—has important gnoseological consequences. These include a recognition of the difficulty that we face when we understand the omnipresence of gender in social life but still cannot think of all reality on the basis of gender, or grant gender theoretical and epistemological centrality, or treat it as a category capable of shedding light on all areas of life. By contrast, in the pre-intrusion world, constant references to duality in all symbolic fields suggest that this problem—the gnoseological devaluation of the gender system—does not exist there.

It is crucially important to note here that

> in this context of change, the old names for things are preserved, and a mirage arises, producing the false sense of continuity, making it seem like the old order, with its system of names, formalities, and rituals, has persisted. But it is now governed by another structure.
>
> *(I take these words from my book* La Nación y sus otros *[Segato 2007])*

This transition is subtle, and the lack of clarity about the changes that have occurred causes women to acquiesce without knowing how to respond to the repeated claim made by men, "we were always like this," or to their claim to

be preserving a custom that they suppose or argue is traditional, a hierarchy of value and prestige that is proper to the community. Hence the blackmail that women permanently face, or with which they are persistently threatened: to touch or alter this order, this identity, and this culture—where identity is political capital and culture is symbolic capital and a point of reference for peoples in their struggles to persist—would be to do damage to and thus to debilitate indigenous demands for lands, resources, and rights understood as resources.

But what has happened, as I have been saying, is that that hierarchical status and the power of those who previously had power—elders, chiefs, and men in general—are enhanced within the space of the village as a result of modern colonization. As I argued above, although it is possible to argue that there was always hierarchy and there were always gender relations that functioned as unequal relations of power and prestige, the colonial intervention of the state and the entry into the order of colonial modernity exacerbate these hierarchies and magnify these oppressive distances. A transformation takes place under the cover of apparent continuity. And one must bring considerable skill to bear in the analysis of rhetoric to understand that the effect of historical depth is an optical illusion that serves to shore up new forms of male authority and other hierarchies in the village. Here we confront the perverse culturalism of the kind I referred to at the beginning of this chapter as the cultural and political fundamentalism of our age, beginning with the fall of the Berlin wall and the obsolescence of old Marxist debates, when newly politicized identities provided a new language for conflicts (Segato 2007).

To sum up, then, and to recapitulate: gestures that purport to allow for the universalization of citizenship are read as replacing a hierarchical order governing the relations between men and women with an egalitarian set of gender relations. But this reading overlooks the fact that what such gestures really do is remedy the harms that modernity has itself introduced, with solutions that are also modern. Again, the state gives with one hand what it has already taken away with the other. *Unlike the modern activist slogan that promotes the "different but equal," the indigenous world is guided by another formula, one that it is difficult for us to understand: "unequal but distinct."* In other words, this world really is multiple, because the other, who is different or distinct, and who may be inferior, does not represent a problem to be resolved. The rule of compulsory commensurability disappears.

It is here that the world-between-worlds of critical modernity enters the picture, complicating and enriching ethnic hierarchies with its discourse of equality, and generating what some have begun to call ethnic or communitarian citizenship. This form of citizenship will only be adequate if it begins with internal autonomy and jurisdiction, that is, with debate and deliberation among the members of a community, weaving the threads of their own history. Here I conclude by referring to the extraordinary film *Mooladé* (2004), by

the recently deceased Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène: a film about the struggle fought by a group of women in a village in Burkina Faso to eradicate the practice of infibulation. This struggle begins from within, as internal to, the community, a community shot through, as it has always been, with elements of the world that surrounds it.

Notes

1 *Translator's Note*: For another translation of this chapter that also includes extensive and informative translator's notes, see Rita Laura Segato, "Gender and Coloniality: From Low-Intensity Communal Patriarchy to High-Intensity Colonial Modern Patriarchy," translated by Pedro Monque, in *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* (forthcoming). Monque's translation is scrupulously faithful to the tone and word order of the original, whereas my translation takes a bit more distance from the syntax of the Spanish at times, for the sake of clarity and flow. I am grateful to have benefitted from a conversation with Monque about many of the questions addressed in this chapter and this book as a whole.

2 *Translator's Note*: The Maria da Penha Law introduced several measures meant to counter domestic violence in Brazil. These ranged from longer prison terms for perpetrators to the establishment of designated courts as well as other institutions, such as women's shelters, that sought to offer protection to survivors. For more detailed descriptions of the law and its effects, see Spieler (2011) and Pasinato (2016).

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6

THE DEEP RIVERS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN RACE

A Rereading of *Mestizaje*[1]

> "In the end, when I understood, I chose my mother," Gerónimo (Grillo) Álvarez Prado told me, in Tilcara, Argentina.

Since the fall of "actually existing socialism" and the start of what some call, not without irony, "actually existing democracy," politics in Latin American countries have increasingly centered on struggles over resources and rights—or more accurately, struggles over the right to resources—related to identity. This fundamental change has marked politics from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the present. The struggles "against the system" of the 1960s and 1970s became, in the 1980s, much less glorious struggles for "inclusion in the system" and demands for the broadening of possibilities for survival within this same system.

In this new context, critical debates pit two positions against one another. The first of these argues that the promise of inclusion constitutes and reproduces a form of false consciousness, since the laws that govern the market—cost-benefit calculations, the value of productivity, competitiveness, and the tendency to accumulate and concentrate wealth—only and inescapably generate more and more exclusions, increasingly and uncontainably. The second position is one dear to human rights activists; it sees in struggles for inclusion an expansion of the field of democratic possibilities, and it sees rights as tools for imposing limits on and importantly restricting economic power while also opening paths toward the acquisition of political power. From this political perspective, it is no longer a matter of deciding between reform and revolution; it is instead a matter of both reform and revolution. That is, reform is seen as the path toward change.

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These two positions can be found, for instance, in the great national debate in Brazil on quotas for black students in universities. In 1999, I was one of the co-authors of the first proposal for a policy that would implement such quotas. The subsequent debate was distilled in two sets of manifestos, each set containing one manifesto for and the other against quotas. The first pair of manifestos, for and against, was submitted by the signatories' representatives to Brazil's National Congress in 2006; the second to the Federal Supreme Court in 2008.

In the manifestos opposing the policy, we can identify two positions, one of them conservative and the other belonging to the critical field that I have already described. The first of these positions is unambiguously reactionary and clearly shows the shameless devotion of white and whitened elites in Brazil to the project of blocking the entry of those socially excluded into universities, which are the corridors leading to positions of control over national life. In other words, this elite seeks to maintain its monopoly over the university, knowing full well that the university is the passage that leads to access to prestigious professions and to the contexts in which decisions about the nation's destiny are made.

In Brazil, anthropology has been the field tasked with formulating the basis of the nation's ideology. Even during its pre-disciplinary phase, anthropology was an armed branch of the elite and was tasked with producing a hegemonic and unitary representation of the Brazilian nation.[2] Thus it is not surprising that anthropologists were forceful representatives of the position opposing quotas, a position that centered on a critique and set of reflections that emphasized the ambiguous status of race and the difficulty of interpreting it in a country like Brazil. From this perspective, race is "created"—instituted—if it is mentioned in legislation. If it is not mentioned in legislation, then it falls short of forceful reality. To create race by legislating it, by this account, is counterproductive, because it divides the nation and weakens its unity.

By contrast, the second position opposed to quotas, which can be defined as critical and not conservative, is one that I anticipated in a text first published in January 1998, long before the debate on quotas began. In this text, I wrote, and I quote, that "race is not a salient or relevant characteristic for union leaders or the leaders of the landless workers' movement." I also wrote that "the introduction of a sort of racial segmentation within these popular fronts would not only be spurious, but also potentially disastrous in its consequences"; here I was alluding to the potential for racial division to weaken the solidarity that is so important to insurgent causes (Segato 1998). It is precisely an argument of this kind, an argument against the racialization not of the nation but of popular struggles, that was made in the context of the debate on quotas by some figures on the Brazilian left, dispersed in various sectors, political parties, and groups, including the Movimento Negro Socialista (Black Socialist Movement). This group was formed just before the first manifesto opposing quotas was submitted to Brazil's National Congress, and its participation in the movement against

quotas could thus be harshly called into question. By way of conclusion, I will return to this argument, which is at once critical of capitalism and opposed to race-based affirmative action.

After this brief introduction to the key issues in the debate on inclusion, my main aim in this chapter is to examine the understandings of identity on which the new forms of politics are centered, revealing the difficulties that emerge when we confront the need to speak of identity either in racial or in ethnic terms in Latin America. But despite this difficulty, we need to speak of race.

Race: The Blind Spot in the Latin American Discourse of Otherness

Noting the persistently authoritarian character of the Brazilian state, Tiago Eli de Lima Passos offers a detailed and grounded analysis of the practices of so-called "public safety" and a critique the distorted historiographic account of the state's authoritarianism. He points to the fallacy of seeing only dictatorial governments—essentially the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas and the one begun in 1964—as authoritarian (Passos 2008). Seen through the eyes of poor non-whites, he argues, the Brazilian state was always authoritarian and always ruled through a state of exception, or through exceptional rules applying to the treatment of the non-white population.

But although we know that the leading cause of death among young black men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five is "killing" (Paixão and Carvano 2008), and that many of these killings are committed by those charged with protecting so-called "public safety," non-whiteness is rarely named as a category in expert reports or police records. A single example can serve to indicate this absent naming, that is, the silence that weighs on race in a context in which it nevertheless determines rates of victimization and generates maximal vulnerability.

Because Brazil has one of the highest rates of extrajudicial executions in the world and is home to an extremely deadly pattern of police killings, the government was compelled to welcome a visit from Philip Alston, a luminary in the field of human rights who arrived as an observer in late 2007, to monitor the excessive use of violence by state agents charged with protecting public safety. It is surprising to find that, in the report from a local organization incorporated in Alston's "Report of the [United Nations] Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions," there is only one casual—that is, non-systematic—reference to the skin color of those who are exterminated. In fact, in Alston's report, there are no data on race, and the skin color of the victims of police violence is only mentioned once. Alston's report cites another report, this one by Odoroilton Larocca Quinto, an expert consultant who worked with the Human Rights Commission of the Rio de Janeiro branch of the Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil, or Brazilian Bar Association, which

analyzed nineteen autopsy reports issued by the Legal Medical Institute of the State of Rio de Janeiro. These reports were issued after the police killed nineteen people in a "mega-operation" in the favela of Complexo do Alemão in June 2007. Although this report noted that the majority of those executed were young, black men, that finding is not reproduced in Alston's report, which, as I have said, mentions the skin color of the victims of police violence only once: when the UN observer notes the generalized "view that police operations are planned for the very purpose of killing poor, black, young men," a view that, he also notes, "is surprisingly mainstream" (Alston 2009: 16).

In my next chapter, on "The Color of the Prison in Latin America," I note the difficulty of speaking of skin color in the context of prisons, and I note that the "color" of prisons is a matter of race, defined not in the sense of belonging to an ethnic group, but rather as a mark of belonging to a history of colonial domination that continues into the present (Segato 2007b). Just as I have found in the writing of this chapter, I found while writing that one that, perplexingly, in Latin America data on the incarceration of "non-white" people is scarce. The few available sources of information, which point to the more frequent criminalization of these people as well as their being detained under worse conditions, tend to refer to indigenous people with identifiable ethnic affiliations or people who come from black lands (as in the case of the *palenques* in Colombia). But data on race, strictly speaking, is always imprecise and based on the impressions of observers, since governments and research institutions lack the demographic information that they would have if race were included as a parameter in census-taking; this makes it practically impossible to find information on "the color of the prison."

These are also the circumstances—circumstances of real cognitive silence, foreclosure, historiographic hesitation, and ethnographic indifference—that, as I seek to show in this chapter, allow us to argue that in Latin America it is difficult to speak of skin color and of the physical traits of the majority. It would seem that there is no available discourse for naming our majority's features, our multitudes' complexions. Here I am not referring to the Indians who live in villages or to the black people in the *palenques* that remain, but rather to the features of our general populations and in some cases our own features as well given that, as I have repeated, as soon as we enter the seats of imperial power, these features catch up to all of us, even if we have four European grandparents.

What emerges in our multitudinous *mestizajes* is the stain of something like a generic and general "non-whiteness." It is a "non-whiteness" without an ethnicity, without a society, without a particular "culture." It is the trace of our history that emerges and appears as a link or lineage, historically constituted and written on the skin, a darkness that gathers density in some places and urban peripheries—*villas* in Argentina, *favelas* in Brazil, *cantegriles* in Uruguay, *callampas* in Chile—and, characteristically, in the carceral landscapes of Latin American prisons. But because colonial history did not simply come to a halt at

a certain moment, this is also a trait that stains us all: again, those who live in our landscapes are all non-white when we travel to the imperial North.[3]

Curiously the treatment of this problem by the entities and organizations that study the situation in prisons is marked by a very limited understanding of the notion of "race." The deficiencies of reflections on this category in Latin America are nothing less than a symptom, a sort of symptomatic blindness that can be seen in the few reports that have in any way attempted to speak about the skin color of those imprisoned. Consider the 2001 report on "Derechos humanos y situación carcelaria en Colombia" (Human Rights and the Situation in Prisons in Colombia) prepared by the Colombian office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, or the report on "The Judicial System and Racism against People of African Descent: The Cases of Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and the Dominican Republic," issued in 2004 by the Justice Studies Center of the Americas.[4] It is clear in both documents that their authors have not found a way to speak of the "color" of the prisons that they visited, except by referring to indigenous people, whether in villages or urban areas (that is, where these peoples are acculturated) or to black people with their own lands, or at best to people "of African descent" in the vague sense of having African cultural ancestry. This last category is worth analyzing. If we consider the criterion of African descent in Brazil, for example, then not only could more than 49% of the population be considered black; in fact, this number would be much greater, and it would never be lower than 70%.[5]

This is owing to the fact that the "color" of prisons that I refer to in that chapter is an evanescent piece of information; it cannot be defined except as the bodily mark of a position in history. This mark has the capacity to reveal and communicate this history to a trained eye: to reveal an indigenous or African family origin that constitutes a reality that persists although it has not given rise to precise statistical metrics. It has, however, given rise to testimonial responses. This is because, as we know, a prison may detain 90% non-white convicts without any of them considering themselves members of an indigenous society or part of a popular political, religious, or cultural collectivity self-described as African American or Afro-descendant. On the other hand, the racialization of incarceration has been so naturalized that agencies and public institutions have not noticed the need to name it or assess it using categories that would allow it to be measured and inscribed in discourse.

All of the most important and compelling counter-hegemonic movements of the present clearly point in this direction: toward the need to unmask the persistence of the colonial and to confront the political meaning of race as a means of destabilizing the deep structure of coloniality. To see race in Latin America, to name it, is an essential strategy for struggle, a step on the path toward decolonization. But speaking of race in this context and within this critical perspective is very difficult, as the example of "the color of the prison" already shows. I am not referring to the understanding of race that presides over

North American mechanisms of classification, but rather to race as a mark that is borne by the peoples who have been dispossessed and that now reemerges. That is, I am referring to race defined as a traveling, changing trait that, though elusive, can still serve as a tool, a means of breaking with a politically anodyne and covertly ethnocidal form of *mestizaje* that is today undergoing a process of deconstruction.

Ethnocidal *mestizaje*, used to suppress memories and deny original genealogies, has a strategic value for elites. This value is now gradually inverted, so that we can see in the *mestizo*, non-white face indices of the persistence of, and the possibility of a reattachment to, a past that is latent, subliminal, and pulsating in the present, although it was targeted for destruction and denial. It is the uncertain sign that emerges in the generically non-white face, the *mestizo* face that changes as one enters each of our countries, like a chameleon, taking different forms in different places. And it is this sign that can guide us toward the reconstitution of whole peoples, toward the recovery of old knowledges and forgotten solutions, in a world where neither the economy nor the forms of justice invented by modernity and administered by a state that is still colonizing are viable anymore. But this "race" that is nothing other than the trace that history has left on bodies, this "race" that dwells in the prisons of Latin America, remains elusive for some reason. It avoids being named, designated, accounted for in statistics, or named in testimonial accounts of incarceration and ghettoization.

This is the effect of a form of censorship, because it is this race that gave rise to the people who have been hidden for centuries in the New World and have almost lost the threads of their history. Neruda already said this in his *Canto general* (*General Song*). This race is ambiguous; it cannot be captured. It is ours—all of ours, when we are seen from the North—and it will, with its manifold reality, offer us a slogan capable of reuniting those disinherited by the colonial process. It is the mark, again, of the majority of those who are incarcerated in Latin America. The prison, as others have already said before me, is the most apt allegory of Latin America.

We should therefore reflect on why it is so difficult to speak of race, to give a name and assign a category to what is plainly evident if we look, for instance, at Latin America's incarcerated population. We should also seek to understand why this race, made up of remainders and residues—a race that is an index and marks a path, a variable, ambiguous, and non-biological race that cannot retrace its lines of descent with any certainty—has been ethnographically and theoretically ignored by the discipline of anthropology until now. This is not only, as I seek to show in "The Color of the Prison," because speaking of this race offends the sensibilities of various enshrined figures, including figures in the traditional and academic left, because it implies giving flesh and blood to the mathematics of class, introducing a color, culture, and history that are Latin America's own and not Eurocentric—in other words, introducing difference. It

also offends the sensibilities of sociology, because there are few numbers related to the issue, and these are difficult to verify with the objectivity owed to the complexities of racial classification in Latin America. In addition, this speech offends the sensibilities of those associated with the discourse of rights and the force of law, because it suggests that there is such a thing as state racism. Finally, speaking of race in this way implies beginning a new era in our political proposals, which will now have to be amended, reconnected to lost threads, reintegrated with the historical consciousness of those who were expropriated and who live today in a state of something like genealogical orphanhood.

I have spoken about the case of Brazil in order to shed light on one of my central preoccupations related to the decisive question of so-called "public safety." Imagine my perplexity, though, when I realized that I could have made the same point by simply referring to the case of the most innocent and well-intentioned of Argentine institutions: the Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo (National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Racism, or INADI), created in the second half of the 1990s with the express aim of opposing racism in Argentina.

This perplexity led me to go back over the last two years' worth of texts by this public institution's observers, and to refer to its website in order to verify the finds that I will now share.[6] If we carefully examine the findings from the complex study that INADI published in the form of a "National Map of Discrimination," proceeding by geographic regions within the country, we discover the same kind of "silence" about race in Argentina that I noted in Brazil. Consider the INADI's PowerPoint slides referring to the City of Buenos Aires.

In the slide that includes the data gathered in response to the prompt, "I am going to read you a series of words, and I'd like you to associate each word with something that occurs to you," we find a list of the words that were read to respondents: "Immigrants," "Maternity Leave," "Person with a Disability," "Aboriginal Person," "AIDS," "Drug Addiction," "Delinquency," "Homosexuality," "Resident of the *Villas* [*Villero/a*]," "Obesity," "Jew," "Elderly Person," "Young Person," "Muslim," "Poverty," "Person of African Descent," "Arab," "Indigenous Person." The majority, *mestizo* race—the race of those who live in the provinces and that is associated with the "other" in Argentina—is not mentioned and is evidently unnamable. Although the word *villero/a*, referring to a resident of one of the *villas* or slums, is included, it refers to the precarious dwellings of the poor and those who have recently moved to the city. The free associations prompted by this word do not include the idea of race, color, or *mestizaje*, as one would expect: 36.3% of respondents refer to "poor people" or "humble people"; the other responses refer to those who "live in a *villa*," to the word *villa* itself, or to "limited" means," "comfort," "education," or "ignorance." We only find a reference to race under "Others," a category that gathers together 35.8% of responses but does not include indications of specific percentages for each "other" response. Here the reference to race takes the

following form: "Form of life/indication of inequality/discrimination/black person/delinquent/robbery/vulnerability/drug addict/insults/bad image/*cartonero*/kill them."

On the following slide, there is a list of respondents' associations with the words "Poverty," and "Africa" appears again as part of a set of "Others," this one representing 16.2% of total responses. In response to "Afro-descendant," "Do not know" was the most common response, representing 27.6% of total responses, while "black people" represented 12.3% of responses (after "Africa," which represented 16.6%), and "race" just 4.5%. Again, under "Others," which made up 26.6% of responses (the second most after "Do not know"), there is one allusion to race among the variety of residual terms that are gathered within this catch-all category: "Cute black person [*negrito lindo*]/how cute they are." At this point, we begin to suspect that there is something in the design of the well-intentioned study that contradicts daily findings in keeping with commonsense.

Again in response to the prompt that begins, "Now I am going to read a series of words," when they heard the word "Indigenous," 7.4% of respondents interviewed mentioned an "autochthonous race [*raza autóctona*]." When the question "To what extent do you think there is discrimination in Argentina?" is posed in relation to "People with disabilities," "Women," "Sexual Minorities (Gays, Lesbians)," "Older Adults," "Religious Minorities," "Overweight People," "The Working Classes [*sectores populares*]," "Boys and Girls," "Young People," and "People Living with HIV-AIDS," the "Working Classes" is in first place, with 88.4% of respondents finding discrimination against this group (although this is the only slide in which the list of responses is not organized according to the percentages of responses). However, there is no mention of race in connection with these "Working Classes."

The spontaneous, multi-part question, "Which do you think are the groups most affected by discrimination in Argentina and in Buenos Aires," elicits the following responses: "Bolivian Immigrants" appear in first place, with 62.3% of responses; "Disadvantaged socioeconomic sectors" is in second place, with 45.4%, followed by "Gays, Lesbians, and Trans People," "Peruvian Immigrants," "People with Disabilities," "Paraguayan Immigrants," "Jews," "Chinese Immigrants," "Chilean Immigrants," "Older Adults," "Women," "Muslims," and "Other Immigrants."

Asked about "experiences of discrimination"—"What types of discrimination have you suffered from or observed?"—respondents answer as follows: "Obesity," 30.8%; "Physical Appearance," 29.1%; "Nationality," 28.8%; "Social Class," 28.6%; then "Disability," "Religion," "Sexual Orientation," "For Being Female," "For Being Young," "For HIV-AIDS Status," and "For Being Male," and "Other." It is possible to conclude that "Physical Appearance," in second place, and "Social Class," in fourth, might be implicitly linked to the variable of "race," or more specifically to "non-whiteness."

It is only in response to another question—"Could you describe the situation [in which you faced discrimination]?"—that the problem of racialization does appear, but even here it depends on and is predicated as poverty, represented by a place of residence: here again, the *villero/a* refers to the *villas de emergencia*, urban enclaves made up of precarious settlements in Argentina. In other words, it is only when people are allowed to recount their experiences and their language is taken into account—that is, when the study comes closer to the qualitative approach of ethnography—that a generic non-whiteness appears. But even here there is no specific name or independent variable assigned to the category known until the 1970s as the *cabecita negra*. This means that a perverse form of "political correctness" has eliminated any name that might give coherence and an existential status to the Argentine multitude.

The power of a name is missing, and this absence also erases the clues that might allow for the construction of a future that would cohere with the past that was displaced by the colonial intervention, first administered by the overseas metropolis, then later by the republican metropolis. But even so the experience of being discriminated against and "being called a *negro villero*," literally a black resident of the *villas*, was mentioned by 7.4% of respondents who answered the question asking them to describe the situation in which they faced discrimination. The response most often given, by 18.1% of respondents, was "for being fat," followed by "for my nationality," given by 12.8% of respondents; "for my physical appearance," given by 9.9% of respondents; and "for my socioeconomic status," given by 9.6% of respondents. It is worth asking whether there is a relationship between public perceptions of socioeconomic status and "non-whiteness," or whether references to "physical appearance" might also point to "non-whiteness."

I also suspect that there is a discrepancy between the mere 7.4% of respondents who recorded having experienced discrimination and being called "*negros villeros*" and the frequent perception—in 88.4% of responses—of discrimination against "the working classes." These classes are clearly racialized in all Latin American countries, as are the "disadvantaged socioeconomic sectors" listed in second place, in 45.4% of responses, after "Bolivian immigrants," in the list of responses to the question about the groups who face the most discrimination in Argentina. It is difficult to reconcile the fact that discrimination against "*negros villeros*" is rarely mentioned with the fact that respondents perceive significant discrimination against the poor. Only a difficulty in the effort to put a racial characterization into words could account for this disconnect between one response and the other. And this difficulty must be described and understood.

In the next slide, when the data is presented by the authors of the study the "*negro villero*" again disappears from view. In this figure's place, the researchers reintroduce the categories that have predominated all along, referring to discrimination "For being a woman," "On the basis of religion," "On the basis of disability," "For being overweight," "For being obese," "On the basis of sexual

orientation," "For being HIV-positive or having AIDS," "For socioeconomic status," "For being young," "For being an older adult," "For physical appearance," and "For other reasons."

This study by INADI thus makes clearer than ever the absence of a name for the general masses, for the Argentine multitude, whose members include those who were not born abroad, do not necessarily live in *villas* or slums, do not consider themselves to be indigenous, and are not delinquents or drug addicts. These people from the country's interior drive taxis, clean the streets, or work as prison guards or as subordinates in the army. They do odd jobs in markets, work as day laborers on estates, are landlords, are sometimes owners and definitely waiters in restaurants, and perform domestic work for hire in our homes.

It was Latin America's so-called "populisms" that managed to provide these multitudes with the categories for self-representation and "recognition" that implied both ethnic and class characteristics, leading to the formation of associations between race, class, and party affiliation. Understandings of "the people" that were coherent with the history of Latin America were forged in this way; they proved to be vulnerable during historical periods marked by the forceful presence of political strongmen, but they remain as categories for collective representation that have their own coherence and consistency.

What race is this? Certainly it is a race that has suffered the worst form of expropriation: the theft of its memory, the partition of its original bloodlines. Its memories were coercively censored and replaced by a blur, a confusion caused by the psychic contraband smuggled in by the nation, with its official narratives. It is like a photograph from which someone has been cut out, leaving only a blank space in memory, one of those photographs in which we have to work to see the trace or the shadow of the person, the hand left behind in the image from which the rest of the body has gone missing. Whether because of a grudge or because of our fear of a truth kept secret, this person has been expropriated of the right to a presence in the scene.

Mestizaje—the "melting pot" or crucible of races, the "tripod of races" or *cadinho* in Brazil—was imposed as a form of ethnocide in Latin America, a forceful erasure of non-white memory. The authoritarianism of the republican states both in the realm of culture and in the realm of "public safety," led to the imposition of a secrecy that has lasted for centuries and driven the deep rivers of our original blood underground. These are the deep rivers, the underground channels of memory, that connect us to them. In this way, for us *mestizaje* can become—and in a certain sense has always been—something else entirely, something much more interesting, vital, and insurgent.

To speak of this general race in search of the memory, the identity, and the name of its ancestors is to be led toward another understanding of *mestizaje*. This is no longer the *mestizaje* produced by the white, whitened, and still colonizing elite, *not the ethnocidal* mestizaje *that was the perfect strategy for the appropriation of bloodlines and the burial of memories: the memory of who were are and where we*

have come from. I am referring instead to *mestizaje* defined as a way of *beginning to be Indian, to be black, of swimming toward the future in new blood, nourished by the addition of new races or coming into contact with new social contexts, new sources of cultural insemination, passing through universities but without letting them displace its difference or its memory, which is at once a treasury of the accumulative memories of the past and a project for the future*. Race understood in this sense is, despite its ambiguities, nothing more and nothing less than the index of the living history of a people, a collective subject that is living and no longer the "object" resulting from the classificatory operations that refer to "ethnicity."

The *mestizo* body can thus be understood as a map for sailing against the current, going against the grain. This is because, as Guillermo Bonfil Batalla has already noted, this body's philosophical, ontological, and spiritual horizon is not European (Bonfil Batalla 1987). Nor is its eco-temporal space, the historical landscape in which it is rooted and that lends it the color of "non-whiteness," with all that this color implies by way of meaning. It is this landscape, to which we all belong, that marks all of us when we enter the European context, staining us with a non-whiteness and making us all into *mestizos*. *Because the sign of race on the* metizo *body is nothing more and nothing less than the index that one had a determinate position in history, that one belongs to a landscape: it is a bodily sign that is read as the trace, remainder, and imprint of a role that has been played*, of a form of territorial rootedness and a particular destiny in and attachment to the events that unfold within this landscape, our geopolitical ground.

As such, this trace runs counter to, sails against the winds of, history. It is a thread that can guide us toward what has been obscured by time, a historical sequence that was lost. We can seek out the signs pointing to the places where the subject has come from, the events that it has passed through during the course of its history, which is almost the same thing as saying: this subject's native landscape. Its place in time, its situation in the world, the geography that is its own. In this way, we can also see the marks of its origin that are inscribed on the subject's body, the events that have unfolded in its space and time. This means reading race, and it is on such a reading that the subject's inclusion in or exclusion from the social context of its racialization, its classification and hierarchization, depends. In this sense, race is a sign, and as such we need to recognize its reality.

Race and History, Otherwise

Aníbal Quijano is a key figure for any effort to understand race as emerging from a historical process, a historical flux. In Quijano's work, the critique of the Eurocentrism inherent in historical materialism proceeds from the demonstration that the Marxist theory of social class cannot accommodate Latin American reality, because this theory was formulated for Europe and based on European reality. This Eurocentric theory of social class, which is

limited in its responsiveness to the Latin American social context, leads to a blindness to race, a refusal to see race as one of the determining elements in social classification and hierarchization in Latin America. Because it does not "see" race, the theory of social class is unable to speak to the reality of our Latin America.

In a 1989 article on "La nueva heterogeneidad estructural de América Latina" (The New Structural Heterogeneity of Latin America), Quijano had already begun to develop this critique of the Eurocentric Marxist understanding of social class, noting that in Latin America the heterogeneity of relations of production gives rise to various forms of subjection to the power wielded by capital, and this results in a complex mosaic, a mix of social classes that do not all correspond to the categories used to refer to relations of production in fully capitalist societies:

> Under the pressure of historical materialism, a reductive vision of this society was produced, a vision that resulted from reducing the whole structure of power to class relations. This produced unwanted results. First, it resulted in the sociological invisibility of phenomena including ethnicity and color, which are nevertheless so abundantly present in relations of exploitation throughout history. Another result was a constant search for classes corresponding to pure or sanitized structural orders, capitalism or feudalism.
>
> *(Quijano 1989: 46)*

For Quijano, the problem that originates in this understanding of classes is not merely a matter of the primacy given to Europe in the problem's definition; rather it is that, as a result of this primacy, classes are removed from their reality and concrete historical variability. Instead structuralist perspectives are imposed on them.

Already in his article "Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social" (Coloniality of Power and Social Classification), Quijano advances this critical analysis and returns to the causes of the invisibility of race in sociological analyses, despite the fact that ethnic and racial classifications are so important in the ordering of populations and the assignment of social positions in Latin America. In this text, Quijano critiques what he calls Marx's own "absolute blindness," in writing "after 300 years of Euro-centered and colonial-modern world capitalist history" but without considering, "the coexistence and association, under capitalism" within Europe itself, "of all forms of the exploitation and domination of labor." This leads Marx to ignore the fact that "in the world of capitalism, there are not only the social classes made up of 'industrialists', on the one hand, and 'workers' or 'proletarians,' on the other, but also 'slaves,' 'servants,' and 'plebians,' 'free peasants'" (Quijano 2000a: 359–360). Above all, when it comes to colonial expansion, Marx ignores, according to Quijano,

> the fact that the relations of domination that originate in the colonial experience of 'Europeans,' 'whites,' 'Indians,' and 'black,' 'yellow,' and 'mestizo' people imply deep structures of power that are, moreover, during that period inextricably linked to the exploitation of labor.
>
> *(Quijano 2000a: 360)*

Quijano also extends the analysis that he offers in this text to point out that in Marx's own work we can find, on the one hand, the roots of a structuralist understanding of class, as when, in *Capital*, classes are defined as social relations independent of subjective experience; and on the other hand, as in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, the idea that "in French society during this period there was not only waged work, but also various other forms of the exploitation of labor, all of them articulated to the domination of capital and organized for its benefit." This statement shows us a Marx inclined to understand classes not as positions within a social structure assigned by the determinations of the capitalist system, but as relations that are subject to variations and historically produced. This anticipates the distinction between capital and capitalism, which is so important to understanding the "heterogenous relations between capital and all other forms of labor."[7] Capital can be read only in terms of the relationship between capital and waged labor, but capitalism is a system that constellates many other kinds of relations of production, not all of them mediated by the wage. It is also important to see that the diversification of relations of production and the proliferation of forms of non-waged labor only compound the crisis of capitalism, especially with the advent of deindustrialization.

Quijano's critique of the theory of class is fundamental for addressing the blindness that I am trying to point to here. This critique suggests that in Latin America it is much more fruitful to think of social classification by drawing on perspectives on colonial-capitalist and modern power, understanding that this power racializes in order to exploit labor of various kinds. Here the effort to capture the value that labor produces takes the form not only of the wage, but also of servile subjection, enslavement, and the combinations of waged labor and servitude that characterize under-compensated positions. For Quijano, "the production of these new historical identities cannot be explained by the nature of relations of production that were established in the Americas" (1993: 2). Rather, in Quijano's theoretical discourse, this relation is inverted so that these new identities anticipate and define the positions in the productive process. We could add, however, that the attribution of non-whiteness is also instrumental for diminishing the value assigned to the labor performed by racialized people and the products of this labor. In other words, racialization leads to the undervaluing of labor, or increases in surplus value extracted from labor. This can still be seen today in a wide range of contexts of production including in academia. We can thus affirm that whiteness operates as a sort of "racial capital," and possession of this "racial capital" adds value to the products of labor, including, among many other possible examples, academic production itself.

Quijano is thus not ambushed by substantive definitions of race, either biological or cultural, as in Paul Gilroy's account of the Black Atlantic, for example, as a cultural unity within the black diaspora. Quijano's interest is not in a people with a shared culture or with a population in the Levi-Straussian sense of a group with a common, identifiable genetic form. Instead Quijano's interest is in a particular type of class that emerges from the classificatory systems and grids imposed by power and its gaze during the colonial experience. Quijano recognizes the existence of diverse forms of "ethnicism" and xenophobia even in the remote past, but he distinguishes these from "race" in the modern sense. Forms of "ethnicism," he says, have probably been "a frequent element in colonialism in all historical periods," but it is only the modernity that derives from coloniality that invents "race" defined as a set of characteristics, with consequences for the control of society and production that I have outlined here (Quijano 1993: 3).

Quijano notes that race is silenced not only in the Marxist theory of class, but also in the constitution of the New World republics. The Eurocentric gaze on Latin America's social reality led to efforts to construct nation-states that would be in keeping with the European experience: as the "ethnic" or cultural homogenizations of populations enclosed within the borders of states. This led immediately to the so-called "indigenous question" as well as to the "black question" (Quijano 1993: 10).

Quijano's formulation of this definition lets us see the workings of social classification more clearly as they operate not only during the stage of their implantation under colonialism, but also, in keeping with Quijano's aims, in all the national, regional, and historical variations that the process of racialization has undergone since then.

I examined this variability in my book *La nación y sus otros* (The Nation and its Others), through the concepts of "national formations of alterity" and "historical alterities" opposed to globalized "identity politics" (Segato 2007a). It is only if we understand that what we call race is the result of a process of cognitive selection—the selection of traits that are transformed into diacritical marks on certain populations, destined to certain places within the social hierarchy and especially within relations of production—that we can account for the malleable nature of this process, which is always instrumental to a power developing its capacities for exploitation. Thus, we need to understand what signs this power selects in a given context to define the non-European, the non-white and the non-empowered. This is the only way to keep race open to history and wrest it from fundamentalist, essentialist, and anti-historical frameworks.

There are no solutions for understanding the phenomenon of race outside the complex perspective that accounts for relations of power that originated with the event of the constitution of the colonial modern system. This does not mean that race does not point, like an index, to the past, the past of a people. On the contrary: to affirm that what today we perceive as non-whiteness is

always the result of an identification of traits that allow for the interpretation of bodies as belonging to conquered peoples, if only because it points to the landscape of military defeat or retreat in the process of conquest, as in the case for Latin Americans whose ancestors are all European when we enter the imperial North. Race is thus a cognitive phenomenon, or what Quijano calls a purely "mental phenomenon," but it offers clues that can lead to an understanding of who we were and therefore who we are.

These appreciations of Quijano's work lead to the conclusion that—contrary to what INADI's "map of discrimination" presumes—the forms of discrimination that are based in racialization are not of the same kind as, and do not originate in the same rationality that gives rise to, other forms of discriminatory mistreatment. Rather they are instrumental to the process of the accumulation and concentration of capital, a process that continues unchecked today. By contrast, the blurring of distinctions in the study that I examined above leads to the near invisibility of what is, again, a complex class system in Argentina. The study also occludes this system's role in the process of exploitative production and the ongoing expropriation of subordinated classes. In the same way, in the Brazilian case, the silence surrounding the race of those killed by police is a silencing of the reality of a persistent genocide that targets subordinate peoples, and the laws that remain in force and give the state a dual character that authorizes the differential treatment of white and whitened people, on the one hand, and non-white people, on the other.

But, again, what is this "whiteness," and what is this "non-whiteness"? What kind of "race" is this, if it functions like class and is a category that organizes exploitation? If in Quijano race is defined as historically emergent, this means that it is opposed to all forms of biological fixation and to all possible essentialisms. Instead it functions as a mirage, an emanation of relations of power. For Quijano, racial hierarchies are implanted and established at the heart of colonial relations. These are anticipated by what is called the "Reconquest" of Spain—which is, for Quijano, "purely mythical"—and the racialization of Jews and Arabs in the metropolitan doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* or "blood purity," where the biological substance that is blood comes to be associated with religious affiliation. It is, according to Quijano, at this moment and in this way that the biologization of culture is invented, and this will come to be called "race" (1993).

Race is thus not a biological reality or even a sociological category, but rather a historically informed reading of a multiplicity of signs—signs that are partly biological and partly derived from the subject's relation to landscapes that are marked by history. But if we accept this, then we must also, inevitably accept the notion that this reading of race is variable; that is, we must accept the variable character of the traits that constitute "race," their capacity to change with changes in context. This phenomenon is clearly demonstrable. Thus the invention of "race" as an instrument for the biologization of culture occurs

in the context of the conquest of the southern part of the Iberian peninsula, and later in overseas territories, where it comes to affect a set of peoples who, in and through this gesture, will constitute themselves as "Spain" and then as "Europe." But the racialization of contingent human beings does not stop here; it remains mobile and continues, as I have argued, through various historical movements, until today.

Here we can perhaps note a point of divergence from Quijano, who argues that these races were "born" at the same time: the invention of the Indian and the black races as "others" and objects of domination, on the one hand, coincides with the invention of the white, European, generic, and dominating race, on the other (Quijano 1991). The colonial and racializing regime, for Quijano, thus establishes a persistent form of coloniality that continues and still today defines the exercise of power. Capitalism and modernity follow, with their centers of power in Europe but their place of origin in the conflagration of the conquest, the encounter between two worlds.

Although generic colonial "races" took shape at this initial moment of colonization, in the clamor of the wars of conquest, these relations of power do not ever cease to be fully historical. They are therefore constantly undergoing transformation. During the economic regime of slavery, race did not suffice to fix persons in their places within the system, and economic legislation decreed which subjects would remain enslaved and who would be "freed" and by what means; the slave was allowed to save and buy his or her "freedom," and it even happened that former slaves became property owners and slaveowners, although such cases were rare.[8] It was only when such legislation governing relations was abolished that race became independent and turned into an invisible and even unnamable law, as I have been arguing. It is at this point that race becomes a fully autonomous structure, one that gives shape to the reality of social and economic relations, organizing these relations behind the scenes. For this reason, I think these two sets of relations are analogous: (1) on the one hand, the relation between the period of colonial administration—at first military, then governed on the basis of the defeat of conquered peoples, and requiring their forced labor—and the coloniality that was thus established as a stable ideology; and, (2) on the other hand, the relation between "race," invented and legislated during the colonial period, and the racial formations or formations of otherness (Segato 2007a) that continue to give rise to constant and regionally differentiated forms of racism. In other words, the colonial regime is to the persisting "coloniality" that it establishes what the initially colonial racial regime is to the variable forms of racism that are proper to coloniality.

This extralegal, "customary" race is thus scalable and fully historical. It functions as a kind of valve allowing for the accumulation and concentration of wealth. Its now diffuse and unnamable character makes it that much more efficient. The premise that the world must necessarily be hierarchical and racialized (apart from the concrete contents of any given form of racialization) has

been naturalized and continues to operate in the systems of authority and, as we know, within supposedly democratic institutions, taking the form of what today we call "institutional racism," giving rise to the epiphenomenon that is the unequal distribution of resources and rights. Subordination was never so exclusively racial as it has been in late modernity, when race acts in the world and takes the form of a ghost, haunting rules and names.

The permanently historical nature of race also makes it so that what we see as race and as leading to exclusion changes when we cross national borders and even when we enter other regional contexts within nations. Quijano emphasizes the co-emergence of the discursive figures of "Europe," "America," the "Indian," the "white person," and the "black person," which, having been non-existent, become veritable historiographic mythemes at the moment of a veritable re-foundation of the world. But he also notes the historicity of the new identities and collective subjects that emerged from the massive conflagration misnamed the "discovery of America." "As we came into the post-independence period, the forms of labour control and the names of the ethnic categories were updated," Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein note, but, they immediately continue that "full-fledged racism … was a creation largely of the nineteenth century, as a means of shoring up culturally an economic hierarchy whose political guarantees were weakening" (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992: 551).

This is why the fixation on race in what are known as identity politics, the politics of difference, or the politics of recognition comes at a perverse cost, even while these politics are at times effective in their demands for rights and resources. But although certain forms of identity are generated *a posteriori* from a sense of shared suffering and not a shared historical experience or common cultural framework, the freezing of identities leads to fundamentalisms, and fundamentalisms are ahistorical, nativist, culturalist, and inevitably conservative in that they are based on the construction of a supposed cultural past and its enforced transformation into a permanent reality.

The identities that are thus generated and defended, even when they are politically efficacious up to a point, presuppose the suspension of the historical process and of the search for the most just and happiest forms of coexistence. The gendered and intergenerational relations construed as most "traditional" are often the best examples of how the cultural relativism that sustains identities can be pernicious; in these cases, it is the internal powers within identity groups who promote the notion that customs are untouchable, precisely in order that they be left untouched. A perspective that I define as *historical pluralism*, one that calls for returning to indigenous peoples the reins of their own histories, offers a more interesting prospect, in my view, than the better-known platform of cultural relativism, which by definition sees cultures as largely inert. *The perspective of "historical pluralism" is still a kind of relativism, but instead of treating culture as matter of fixed and inert identities immune to time, it sees the historical projects of peoples as the central vector of difference.*

From this perspective, thinking of identities as mobile and unstable, historically produced and transformed, it is possible to understand that the idea of *mestizaje* itself has been understood in different ways and assigned different values, that its meanings and values remain malleable. On the one hand, from the perspective of elites, *mestizaje* was understood as a path leading toward whiteness, a matter of homogenization and in this sense ethnocidal, because despite the fact that it envisions a "mestizo utopia" capable of unifying the nation through an amalgamation of societies, it in fact leads to the forgetting of constitutive lineages. In this version of *mestizaje*, the compass points North, toward "progress" and the modernization of a nation that, in and through this *mestizaje*, frees itself from part of its ancestry, renouncing its past. In Brazil, the modernist allegory of cannibalism, where the digestion of cultures gives rise to a new people, a *mestizo*, crossbred people, forgets that there is only one organism that metabolizes all other cultures in a violent, unifying digestion. In this and other elite versions, *mestizaje* is thus a one-way street, a unitary path that leads the nation toward whiteness and Eurocentric modernization.

In recent decades, the social movements based on "identity politics" have responded to this dominant understanding of *mestizaje*. Black and indigenous activists thus condemn *mestizaje* as a form of whitening, that is, a strategy for the suppression of political, ethnic, and racial "minorities." Brown (*pardo*) people in Brazil declare themselves black, and, instead of being a disordered network of paths leading to the return to and reconstruction of lost histories, *mestizaje* is unified and reified, made into a unitary identity and a unique model for the construction of identity. From the perspective that I propose here, by contrast, a third and new understanding of *mestizaje* comes into view: *mestizaje* as a compass pointing South. A *mestizo* body under deconstruction is thus a set of keys that allow us to locate this body in a landscape, where a landscape is a matter of both geography and history.

A Word on Indians

If the classifications and configurations of identity based on the idea of race seem ambiguous to us in Latin America, then we might think that the anthropological understanding of culture would offer us shelter in the certainty that we are speaking of ethnicities, at least in the case of indigenous peoples. But it is time to offer some corrections in this sense: as it happens, when we ask ourselves, "what is a people?" we find that the answer in this case is not simple either, here in the American world. And yet this is and must be the question, not only because the notion of an ethnic group, based on the idea of cultural repertoires defined as the foundations of identities, is a classificatory, archivistic, and thus reifying notion both for researchers and for the subjects who are considered "ethnic," but also because the idea of such foundations for identities falls short in concrete historical cases.

To illustrate this claim, I will refer here to the story of a Tapuia woman from the village of Aldeia Carretão in the state of Gaiás, born in 1952. I heard this story in the heat of a meeting of a nascent group of Brazilian indigenous feminists, a meeting that took place in Tangará da Serra, in the state of Mato Grosso, during one of the workshops organized in 2009 by the women's committee of the Fundação Nacional do Índio, to discuss gendered violence against indigenous women and how the Maria da Penha Law against Domestic Violence might apply in the indigenous case.

When I asked her about her white skin, her wavy hair, and her European appearance, Ana Lino Tapuia, my roommate in the lodgings where we were staying, explained to me that when she visits the town of Rubiataba, the administrative center of the municipality to which her village belongs, no one doubts her indigenous ancestry. In other words, despite her physical traits, in her region she is read and classified as "Indian," without there being any room for doubt. Noting my perplexity, she explained that this is the result of the history of the reconstruction of her people. A version of this story, she explained, although not an identical version, had already been recounted by her mother, decades earlier, when her mother spoke to the anthropologist Rita Heloisa de Almeida Lazarin, who, as I confirmed, recorded the account in her thesis and in other publications (1985, 2003). To be sure, for reasons related to colonial shame, the story that Ana Lino told me in Tangará da Serra differed from and complemented the official history of the Tapuio people; a version of this official history can be found on the ethnographically informed webpage of the Instituto Socioambiental do Brasil (ISA 2009).[9]

According to Ana Lino's extraordinary account, the Tapuio had been one of the most populous peoples before the Portuguese arrived; then, after wars and massacres, they nearly reached the point of extinction, and a series of epidemics seemed to be about to deliver the final blow. After this sequence of catastrophes, there were only three Tapuio women left alive during the first decades of the twentieth century, one of whom was Ana Lino's great grandmother. Facing the imminent end of the world to which they belonged, these three women devised a strategy that allowed them to conquer a death both personal and collective. This strategy involved a practice of mating with any foreigner who might travel through their lands, no matter his place of origin or color. White, Xavante, and black men were all approached and called on to perform the task of procreating and thus reconstructing the demographic basis that would allow for the remaking of the Tapuio people. The women pursued this strategy until they could rest assured that their continuity and ability to occupy the land ceded to them by the Portuguese crown in the seventeenth century were guaranteed. Today, with around 300 members, the community is out of danger and in fact growing despite its poverty. But this origin in a convergence of bloodlines should not be thought of as rare, because it was always through a convergence of bloodlines that, in the remote past, peoples were formed, peoples whose substantive identity we do not doubt today.

But what I want to emphasize in this extraordinary history is that the events that it recounts imply a total and unrestricted suspension of all of the criteria that today we think of as part of the idea of culture: rules of conjugality and kinship, beliefs about life and procreative practices, understandings of identity that form barriers between societies, and so on.

The three women who reconstructed the Tapuio world strategically renounced all of the points of reference for what we think of as ethnicity—and the identities and identifications that follow from these—and strictly pursued what I have been calling a historical project, acting as what I have been calling historical vectors, with a sense of the future and the awareness of a past. This, too, like the reconstitution of this people with biological material resulting from the confluence of inputs from other societies, should not be thought of as strange, because, as ethnographers have always noted in the field, the suspension of rules was always as statistically relevant in human experience as their fulfillment (Keesing 1975; Holy y Stuchlik 1983). Studying limit cases like this one, cases that lead us to put our understanding of what constitutes a people to the test, should help us to see the failures and deficiencies of our certainties when it comes to culture and cultural relativism, which is useful as a means of "displacement" when we undertake ethnographic observation but impoverished as a means of approaching long-term historical processes, especially in contexts of crisis and intervention shaped by the deep structures and history of coloniality.

This is why I think the perspective that I have called "historical pluralism" is more fruitful, a more comprehensive approach capable of accounting for and exceeding the relativity of culture. This is necessary to prevent us from losing sight of the only thing that is irreplaceable from the point of view of peoples themselves: their will to exist as collective subjects of history and to persist under the sun. Here again, we can refer to Quijano, whose work has been a point of reference for this essay and offers a critique of what he calls "the metaphysics of the historical macro-subject" (Quijano 1992: 446). This critique points precisely to the fact that the Eurocentrism proper to the relations of power that he calls "coloniality" have resulted in the predominance of an organicist understanding of social totality, including in Marxist theory. In other words, the evolutionism that predominated in both liberal and Marxist theory was associated, in both, with the "presumption of a historically homogenous totality, despite the fact that the order organized by colonialism was not homogenous." Quijano thus notes that "the colonized part" of the world "was not fundamentally included in this totality"; that is, non-Western peoples were included in the march of history only as exterior to it, and the meaning and direction of the course of history were dictated by Europe. The "hierarchical order" of this society, conceived as a "closed structure," with "functional relations between its parts," presupposed "a single historical logic for the whole totality" and led to an understanding of "society as a historical macro-subject gifted with a

historical rationality, a form of law that would allow it to foresee the behavior of the whole and each part as well as the direction and end of its development in time" (Quijano 1992: 445). All of this was thought to take place according to a single historical logic, "like an evolutionary continuum from the primitive to the civilized, from the traditional to the modern, from the savage to the rational, and from pre-capitalism to capitalism," with Europe always acting as a "mirror of the future for all other societies and cultures" (Quijano 1992: 446, 2000b).

This is precisely the picture, the mirage, the epistemological straitjacket that I am attempting to break when I propose the category of "historical pluralism," in a spirit similar to the one that in the past led anthropologists to propose "cultural relativism" as an invention that could counter the monism and unilateralism of Western reason. Unfortunately, the political project that came to follow from the notion of cultural relativism failed in two ways, although it has not failed in purely pragmatic terms, as an instrument for the production of knowledge used strictly as a means by which to displace the observer's perspective. The two political failures of cultural relativism are: on the one hand, that it has barely scratched the surface of the Eurocentric evolutionist and developmentalist common sense that dominates the world; and, on the other, that it has come to serve and sustain fundamentalist and anti-historical politics. This is why I now think that, as a means of breaking with the mystifying metaphysics that posits Europe as a macro-subject of history, and with the notion that history is a unified and homogenous field, the notion of "historical pluralism"—still a relativist notion—is more efficient and accurate.

The Signs of *Mestizaje* at the Historical Crossroads

The sign that we call "race," in all its immense variability and in its diverse meanings and registers, serves, as I have said, as an index that points to a position. I mean a position within a landscape: the landscape in which the subject is rooted and that represents a locus in history: a place of power or subjection, of ancestral defeats or victories. In the reinterpretation of the mestizo body that I offer here, which sees this body as an unstable composition, I simply want to call attention to the problem of the nation in Latin America, a problem that is all of ours: the necessity of coming together as coalitions of peoples [*gentes*], each pursuing a historical project of its own, where each of these projects was abandoned as a result of the colonial intervention. We need to take this rootedness, this "position" that is indexed by the trace read as race, as a point of departure in order to formulate projects for our future existence. This is why identity politics, as a global program—with its current demands based on stereotyped identities and without a sense of the mobile nature of history, or of its landscapes and positions, which are relative and situated—cannot account for the depth and density of the historical shift that is taking place.

In two of his very early essays, "Dominación y cultura" (Domination and Culture) and "Lo cholo y el conflicto cultural en el Perú" (The Popular and Cultural Conflict in Peru), published in 1969 and 1964, respectively (Quijano 1980) and later in "Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina" (Coloniality of Power, Culture, and Knowledge in Latin America), Quijano also looks to *mestizaje* for an alternative to whitening; that is, he turns to *mestizaje* in order to oppose the creole, where this is a *mestizaje* from below, one that opposes *mestizaje* from above. Mestizo subjectivity, or the *cholo*, for Quijano, results from the dissolution and homogenization imposed on indigenous identity by the "long history of relations between coloniality and resistance" (Quijano 2000b: 128). This "new social, cultural, and political identity" pointed, in Quijano's early publications, to the possibility of a "re-origination" of subjectivity, a Peruvian subjectivity that would be opposed to an "oligarchic, creole, coastal, and chiefly Andean" form and that would have its own "potential for autonomy and cultural originality" (Quijano 2000c: 128). At a far remove from Gilberto Freyre's writings on Brazil—which saw the capture, kidnapping, violation, appropriation, and devouring of African and Indigenous forms of life by Portuguese lust and greed as positive developments to be affirmed—Quijano spoke of a subject that might unify the nation on the basis of indigeneity, a subject that would be equipped for modernity but Andean and also autochthonous. But, as Quijano will recognize later, his prediction did not come true, and the *cholo*'s potential, insurgent subjectivity will be captured by the bourgeois, technocratic, and authoritarian populist project of Peruvian *velasquismo*.

The idea of a *mestizaje* that is fertile for the reshaping of our realities has only now returned in critical and radical perspectives on the Andean world, and in this chapter I have sought to signal my own solidarity with this project. In his critique of what he calls the "historicism" of the *mestizo* utopia defined as part of the nation's evolutionary journey toward its modern destiny, Javier Sanjinés seeks to destabilize the reification of the "mestizo" defined as an identity that is consumed or consumable, and he argues that this figure corresponds to an unrealizable developmentalist dream. Concluding his extensive essay on Bolivian mestizo Marxism, Sanjinés refers to and examines a political statement made by the radical Katarist Felipe Quispe Huanca, also known as El Mallku, quoted in an interview with the magazine *Pulso* (October 13–19, 2000) as saying that "We have to Indianize the *q'aras*" (the *mestizos*). Months before, Sanjinés recounts, "the Aymara leader had said, '*mestizaje* disgusts me'" (Sanjinés 2005: 183). For Sanjinés, "by arguing—later—that 'we have to Indianize the *q'aras*' and correct the injustices that have been committed against the indigenous nations," El Mallku turned the metaphor for the construction of the nation on its head; he practiced a "pedagogy in reverse," one that "*negatively* read the national understanding" or myth of *mestizaje*, decomposing it in the process

(Sanjinés 2005: 184). Referring to the ideologue of the *mestizo* Bolivian nation Franz Tamayo, El Mallku notes:

> Tamayo takes off our clothes and dresses us as *mestizos*. We have been living in borrowed clothes since then … We know that these clothes do not belong to us, although many insist on continuing to wear ties, looking like fat pigs when they do. Underneath we are Indians and will keep being Indians.
>
> *(Sanjinés 2005: 185)*

In my admittedly loose and general interpretation, the "whitened" person is here urged to remove his dress or disguise and accept his rootedness in the landscape to which he belongs, and to accept the ancestors who dominate this landscape as well, walking backward on the path that had seemed to lead West inexorably. This "whitened" person is also undone when he recognizes his own subjectivity as plural and comes to see himself as a subject shaped by various historical trajectories.

This means that identity politics are not enough; nor are the public policies that derive from them. It is necessary to imagine another "re-origination," to take up the threads in a historical tapestry that was abandoned when work on it was interrupted by colonial repression, prohibition, intrusion, and intervention, by the long, interminable censorship of memory that interminably drove indigenous and African people in Latin America underground, together with those who entered the trenches with them to resist colonial power. All of those marked by their rootedness in these landscapes have wandered, disoriented, since then.

I conclude, then, by returning to the question that I left unanswered at the beginning of this chapter: What might be the value of the struggle for a politics of inclusion in university life for black students? As I have already argued (Segato 2002, 2007c, 2007d), two important gains follow from this struggle for inclusion that largely transcended identity politics as such. The first of these is what, to use a classical activist term, we could call "agitation," since even mentioning the possibility of opening the doors barring access to university education led to an impassioned debate within society, one that soon reached the media and politics, compelling elites to discuss a problem that had been silenced until then: the problem of Brazilian racism. The second gain of the proposal for inclusion was the introduction of a historical awareness, an awareness that society is capable of deciding to push for movement within its structures and the deactivation of accustomed practices, which can be replaced by others. In other words, the proposals introduced what I have called a "historical faith," that is, the belief that history is open, undecided, and available to alteration by collective will. This is, in Quijano's words, the conviction that "in its ceaseless transfiguration," "history is a wager in the most Pascalian sense of the word" (Quijano 1987: 110).

Notes

1 I am grateful for the help that I received in composing this chapter from Arivaldo Lima Alves, a professor at the Universidad Estadual de Bahia, and from Luis Ferreira Makl, Professor at the Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín. I dedicate this chapter to Aníbal Quijano, with affection and admiration. *Translator's Note*: References to "the Latin American race" in the singular are more common in Spanish than in English. Readers familiar with Los Angeles, for instance, will recall the Plaza de la Raza, also known as the "Place of the People." Here as in many other contexts, *la raza* and the English word "race" are not strictly equivalent. Segato's chapter title is thus a provocation, but it is not quite as pointed a provocation as the English translation might suggest. Still, the word "race" is warranted in the translation because of the argument about racialization that Segato makes throughout the chapter.

2 In Argentina, for example, history is the discipline that came to function as this kind of armed wing of the elite, tasked with constructing its ideology and producing the hegemonic representations of national "myths."

3 And when we cross the border to live in the United States, things get worse: we are all turned into "Chicanos," given shelter within a generalized Hispanic population, subsumed within a category that has very little capacity to address who we are in fact, or the particular histories from which we come.

4 Available at https://biblioteca.cejamericas.org/bitstream/handle/2015/3568/raz-sistema-judicial-racismo-ing.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

5 This claim is confirmed by the study led by Sérgio Pena and others (2000), which the authors saw as a strategic means of supporting the politics of those opposed to race-based affirmative action in Brazil.

6 See https://www.argentina.gob.ar/inadi.

7 Quijano does not neglect to add that, near the end of his life and as he becomes aware of the positions of the Russian populists, Marx came to perceive the unilinear character of his historical perspective and his Eurocentrism, but "he does not make the epistemological leap corresponding" to this realization. The systematization of his thought in historical materialism, moreover, did not take his late reflections into account and chose instead to consolidate a Eurocentric doctrine (Quijano 2000a: 360).

8 Recent historical studies shed light on this aspect of Brazilian society under slavery. See, for example, Albuquerque (2009) and Castillo y Parés (2007), as well as the pioneering work of Reis (2003).

9 See http://pib.socioambiental.org/pt/povo/tapuio/1016.

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