

Africanity, Indianity, Latinity: the Racism and the Colonial Matrix of Power

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Latinity and Haitian identity are two categories in conflict. Latinity was the French imperial ideology in the nineteenth century, bought by the Creoles of European descent in the Spanish and Portuguese ex-colonies. Paradoxically, Haiti has not been at the center of the constitution of an Euro-South American Latin identity. The revolutionary thinkers of de-colonial *latinite*, Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, did not really count on such a canon, neither in Southern Europe nor in Ibero (Spanish and Luso) America. The reasons seem very obvious, although elegantly hidden: the *latinite* in South America resulted from the complicity between Creoles from European descent (at the beginning of the independent republics, Spain and Portugal) and French imperial ideologues promoting *latinite* in confrontation with the Anglo-Saxon imperial world. The Haitian revolution, instead, was in the hands of African slaves and Creoles from African descent. Thus, Africanity did not mesh very well at

that point with Latinity: one identity was imperial and the other colonial/decolonial. Furthermore, Haitian revolutionaries were also aware of the fact that Haiti was an Indian name, from the indigenous people that were wiped out thanks to the arrival of Christian and European civilizing ideals. Last but not least, the uprising of Tupac Amaru in the viceroyalty of Peru was familiar to the revolutionary African slaves and Creoles from African descent here, in Haiti.

The history of Haiti since the revolution shows that Haitian identity is not warranty of anything, in the same way that Christianity, Liberalism or Socialism, are not warranty of anything either. There is no identitarian safe place, be them the macro narrative of European modernity (Christianity, Liberalism, Socialism) of de-colonial identities like Haitian, post-Partition India. All identities have liberating and oppressive potentials. Consequently, in the course of Haitian history, nothing prevented Creoles of African descent from joining the imperial politic and economic projects of France or the U.S. Nevertheless, because of the modern/colonial racial system, to be a Creole of African descent is not the same as being a Creole of European descent. The racial classification of the modern/colonial world configured a space in which Geo-historical and Body-locations have been marked and stigmatized by the racial matrix of power. Thus, there is a particular kind of identity in which Geo-historical and body configurations have been and continue to be nodes through which imperial/colonial conflicts are reproduced. On one hand, identities in the

modern/colonial world emerged through the imperial allocation of meanings. There were no Indians or Blacks before the emergence of the Atlantic economy, the exploitation of labor and the massive slave trade. Indians and Blacks were imperial identitarian inventions in the process of creating a racial matrix of power. Imperial identities were based on Theo- and Ego-politics of meaning (understanding) and knowledge. De-colonial projects have been responding from the emergence of a combined de-colonial Geo- and Ego-politics of meaning and knowledge. Thus, identities (geo and body political identities) are and should be heavily implicated in the question of knowledge and of epistemology. George Berkeley's *Principle of Human Understanding* (1710) is being rewritten founded in a genealogy of de-colonial thought that goes back to the sixteenth century.

The question I am raising is that of the relationship between identity, local geo-histories and epistemology (in the general sense of principles and assumptions of and about knowledge). It is possible that some of you, at this very moment, are thinking: oh, well, still with identity politics! If that is the case, I would like to invite you to reconsider and to detach identity politics from the relationship between identity and epistemology. If we do not do that, we will remain slaves of the monotopic diversity of what can be called Western and modern epistemology: that is, principles and categories of knowledge grounded in Greek and Latin and developed in the six modern imperial European languages: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German and English.

Any other language has been excluded, since the European renaissance and the historical foundation of the modern/colonial, imperial and capitalist world. The modern/colonial world was imagined and constructed through two basic devices: the imperial and the colonial differences that touched upon all spheres of social life, people, nature, etc. Identities were created by imperial discourses, and the agents of imperial discourses were not African and Indians, but Europeans. Indians and Blacks were (and still are) two identitarian imperial constructions that erased the self-identity that people built for themselves in sub-Saharan Africa, in Tawantinsuyu and Anahuac. But, as Aymara intellectual and activist Fausto Reinaga stated, going against the grain of liberal and Marxist discourses in Bolivia, “I am Indian, not peasant, damn it!” and “I have been made Indian by the colonizer, and it is as Indian that I will fight for decolonization.” If that is identity politics, there is nothing but identity politics and you can find it in Bush and Blair but also in the European Union. They are both “politics of identity.” But some are imperial politics of identity and others are de-colonial. And, it is from the perspective of imperial politics of identity, that is, from the discourse that has the upper hand in education, media and rumor, that de-colonial politics of identity is accused of being identity politics. Identity politics—says the imperial perspective—is divisive; it underlines differences instead of paying attention to the universality of humanity to our common humanity, etc. (e.g., imperial identity politics at its best, as the very concept of

humanity in such discourse, is imperial but disguised as universal).

The relationship between the politics of identity and epistemology is crucial for any de-colonial project, in the sense that it unveils the hidden complicity of European and the US imperial identity epistemologies. Latinity is one aspect of European identity, the Europe of the South. “Haitian identity” has more to do with the history of slavery than the history of Greece and Rome. Rémy Brague (*Europe, la voie romaine*, 1999) sees a “Roman attitude” in European identity. I suspect that in Haiti, as well as other Caribbean Islands and in the Andes, the “Roman attitude” sounds like a phantasmagoric sound. What I see in common in the Caribbean and in the Andes, among Afro-Caribbeans and Afro-Andeans, as well as among Indigenous people, is the “de-colonial attitude,” which leads to the de-colonial epistemic shift. Without that shift, any struggle for liberation and de-colonization will remain caught in the spider web of a monotopic epistemology grounded in Greek and Latin and not in Aymara, Quechua, Creole, Voodoo or *Candomblé*.

It should be clear by now that I am using epistemology on the one hand as a short cut, to avoid two or three paragraphs describing what I am trying to say about knowledge and identity. Or, if you wish, what I am driving at is at the re-writing of George Berkeley’s *Principles of Human Understanding* (1710). Berkeley’s essays contributed to frame the epistemology of the zero point, as Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez describes the totalitarian episte-

mology of modernity: a perspective that does not admit other perspective (only internal variations) and that in order to survive and grow, it has to colonize other knowledge in the same way that capitalism colonizes other economies. The epistemology of the zero point was concretely built on the Theo- and Ego-logical politics of knowledge. Berkeley was right at the crossroads of a period in European history in which Theo-politics of knowledge was dominant, to the moment in which a secular and ego-political epistemology became dominant and hegemonic. Berkeley erased (that is, he was born and educated within an epistemological belief system in which Geo-historical locations and body configuration was irrelevant for knowledge) his Irish roots. Born in Ireland, he became an Anglican bishop and eventually found himself in London, in the care of a rich family that needed a chaplain and tutor. Instead, he followed the theological foundation of knowledge and understanding and crossed with the emerging Ego-politics of knowledge. Berkeley picked up on John Locke's distinction between "primary" and "secondary" qualities of things. In the order of knowledge, "secondary qualities" had to be bracketed to avoid interference with the "primary qualities" of the mind to attend objective knowledge and understanding of the world and society. But Berkeley was a bishop and he linked the primary qualities of Man with the observing mind of God. But, of course, neither Locke nor Berkeley realized (or wanted to realize) that the "secondary qualities" were their own Geo-historical locations and body configuration, acting upon their epistemological fantasies. The epistemic

de-colonial shift initiates an epistemology that inverts Lockean principles and starts from the “secondary qualities.” It inverts also Cartesianism, in the sense that for a Geo- and Body-politics of knowledge, the basic principles are “I exist, therefore I think” and not the other way around. But, of course, the emergence of Geo- and Body-politically based epistemology is not just a simple inversion within the same logic of the game established by Thomas Aquina, Descartes and Locke. The Geo- and Body-politics of knowledge makes the epistemic colonial difference a non-negotiable epistemological principle.

Rewriting Berkeley’s *Principles of Human Understanding* means to write not just his own interpretation, but also the basic principles that sustain the entire philosophical apparatus of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. I am not inventing this rewriting and I am not alone. It started in the late sixteenth century with Quechua dissidents, as Waman Puma de Ayala in Tawantinsuyu/Viceroyalty of Peru toward the end of the sixteenth century; it continues with the political treatise of Oulabbah Cugoano in late eighteenth century England; then activist and religious political theorist Mahatma Gandhi in late nineteenth and early twentieth century India; with Frantz Fanon’s experiences in Martinique, France and Algeria and with Gloria Anzaldúa’s in the Mexico/US borderland. But, of course, Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge, and therefore imperial, managed to repress and disqualify any kind of thought process that did not comply with the notion of the Christian God and of the Secular Reason. The list could be extended, in the past

and in the present, but this gives you an idea that it is possible to think next to Aristotle, Saint Thomas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Adam Smith, Marx, Freud, etc. What I mentioned is a paradigm of co-existence, a paradigm of de-coloniality; the silenced and absent paradigm in the triumphal modern and post-modern history of Western European and the U.S..

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Between approximately 1776 and 1848 (I am referring to the second French revolution, as well as the Guadalupe-Hidalgo treatise in which the U.S. appropriated a vast amount of ex-Mexican lands and people—which, of course, almost everybody has forgotten), a change in the modern/colonial world took place, but only a segment of that turn around has been recognized as part of universal history. Thus, at the turn of the nineteenth century, four identitarian configurations emerged in conflict: Latinity, Africinity, Indianity and Chicanos/as that, at the end of the 20th century will identify themselves as Latinos/as. That is, as *Latinidad*, but a *Latinidad* that is from the start cut-off from their original European counterpart.

The original idea of Latinity emerged from imperial re-articulations while the last two ideas (*Latinidad* in South America and in the U.S.) from the de-colonial projects. In South America, Latinity was a dual identity. The imperial, European one contributed to the formation of internal colonialism in South America. The complicity of the Creole elites from European descent that wanted to liberate them-

selves from Spain and Portugal, were eager to embrace French ideas and British economy and turn their back to Afros and Indians. Simultaneously, Latinity reproduced, in the Americas, the European imperial division between a Protestant and Anglo-Saxon North and a Latin and Catholic South. Thus, Latinity served, in the Americas, not only French colonial purposes, but also its confrontation with the growing influence and expansion of the U.S. to the South. That confrontation still exists today, highlighted even in the pages of *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Latinidad in the U.S. has been from the start out of that game and cut the umbilical cord with imperial Latinidad. Latinos/as in the U.S. joined the de-colonial projects of Afro-Caribbean and South Americans, as well as of Indigenous people in both South and North America.

I have suggested that identities founded on geo-historical locations and body configurations are, on the one hand, imperial allocations of meaning and, on the other, de-colonial, dis-identification and re-identification. The Cold War division of the planet into three realms is one example. Orientalism, is another. The Third World was an imperial geo-historical construction that joined with the bodies of the people inhabiting it. And the Third World was never assumed to be white; it was the location of people of color. And people of color are not supposed to think—here you have the reproduction of the colonial difference at its best. The Second World was the territory of slave's masters, that is, of white people. But they were communists with Cyrillic alphabet and a Christian Orthodox

church; therefore, not white enough. Here you have the imperial difference (already racial) at its best. And the First World was imagined as white Christians located in Atlantic Europe and the U.S. In this case, the imperial difference at its best, but always with the racial component of the colonial difference. Thus, de-colonial des-identification (in the French Caribbean, in India, in Bolivia, in Uzbekistan or even Russia) and re-identification have been articulated as the Geo- and Body-politics of knowledge; a paradigm of co-existence and of confrontation with the imperial Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge. Thus, “Latinity and Haitian Identity” is not just a “cultural” question, but epistemological above all; it cuts across the colonial epistemic difference and demands de-colonial epistemic shifts.

Haitian identity seems to be a question of Africanity rather than of Latinity, as I have already suggested. And Latinity and Africanity are on different sides of the racial imperial/colonial division: Latinity is basically white and Africanity is basically black. Or, as Valentine Mudimbe asks, in this conference, “que’est ce que c’est qu’un Noire Latin?” The question of Africanity, in the imperial/colonial imaginary has always been an imperial identity, an allocation of meaning based on the imperial rhetoric that questioned the humanity of the African people and their “rational” marginality. Ottobah Cugoano’s *Thoughts and Sentiments of the Evil of Slavery* (1786) in England—some hundred and seventy years after Waman Puma de Ayala in the Andes at the beginning of the seventeenth century—was

one of the first known cases contesting the enlightened formulation of the superiority of the White Man (and the Theo-logical and Ego-logical foundation of knowledge and understanding). Cugoano's work was more than a slave narrative: it was a de-colonial epistemic move, a de-colonial shift in relation to Locke's and Berkeley's treatises on Man and human understanding. But he was not recognized as a philosopher who conceptualized knowledge and understanding, and a new concept of Human Beings on different basis. Instead, he was recognized as victim-narrator. That was the price he had to pay for not being recognized as a philosopher and epistemologist, next to Berkeley and Locke, but from the colonial side of the epistemic difference. As the dictum goes, white men have reason and knowledge, while black people have experience. Certainly, Cugoano relied on Christianity to articulate his political theory against slavery and to create a new concept of humanity and society. But, let's not jump into an early critique of Cugoano because he relied so heavily in Christianity. Let's think, rather, about the context in which he was fighting and shifting the geography and the biography of reason toward de-colonial projects that, later on, will be picked up (directly or indirectly) by activists and intellectuals like Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon.

Imperial narratives, contrary to de-colonial ones—were centered on imperial nationalities—Spanish, Portuguese, British and French. Travelers, intellectuals and scholars wrote mainly about their imperial interests and against the imperial interests of the other nations (like in the case of the

“Black Legend,” promoted by Elizabeth I of England, toward 1560, against the triumphal Spain of Philip II). De-colonial narratives after 1650 displayed the scenario of imperial conflicts of which the colonial subject was always at the receiving end, no matter what empire ruled. In 1690, for example, Mexican Creoles of Spanish descent, Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, in *Las Aventuras de Alonso Ramírez*, told the story (*infortunios*) of Puerto Rican born, Alonso Ramírez, whose father was from Andalucia; his mother was born in Puerto Rico. In his adventures, Alonso travels from Puerto Rico to Mexico, and from Mexico to the Philippines, where he encounters British pirates. The narrative has been disputed in its nationality and genre. To my knowledge, no one to this point showed the de-colonial perspectives of Creoles of Spanish descent who experienced—at the end of the seventeenth century—the deployment of imperial conflicts where Creoles in South America (through Alonso Ramírez) were spectators, in their local colonial histories, of imperial conflicts and imperial histories. And, of course, if Creoles from European descent were marginal, worst was the situation of Indians and Afros.

More radical than Waman Puma—and around two hundred and fifty years later—was the emergence of a new vocabulary about Man and Knowledge, but also of new imperial players beyond Spain and Portugal. In the de-colonial narrative of Ottobah Cugoano, he doesn’t favor one imperial nationality over the other. The clarity in which Cugoano states that the Americas and racial slavery (e.g.,

Atlantic slave trade) are the result and consequence of Western European imperial powers:

The French and English, and some other nations in Europe, as they founded settlements and colonies in the West Indies or in America, went on in the same manner, and joined hand in hand with the Portuguese and Spaniards, to rob and pillage Africa, as well as to waste and desolate the inhabitants of the western continent (1787).

Anthony Bogues's reading of Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments* is crucial in understanding the spatial epistemic break introduced by de-colonial epistemologies for two reasons (*Black Heretics, Black Prophets. Radical Political Intellectuals*, 2003). First, Bogues understood that Cugoano is not one more "slavery narrative," and as such, a piece of literature or autobiography, as has been cast and celebrated in the reprints (in the past 20 years) that responded to a market-vogue of that kind of literature (now *démodé*, and Cugoano's book out-of-print with no indication that it will be reprinted). And secondly, Bogues makes clear that Cugoano's is a political treatise, like John Locke's (and I would add, as Waman Puma de Ayala).

Bogues took Cugoano out of the culture-box, the box where "Black" intellectuals have been admitted because, as Lewis Gordon says, Blacks have experience while Whites have reason. Bogues placed Cugoano where he belongs: to reason a political theory, and to radically de-link from the limits of white, honest liberals and anti-slavery fighters. Bogues's analysis and arguments clearly show that white theorists, including women (*Wollstonecraft*) were not able

to trespass the line of the colonial difference: slavery was a bad social institution, anti-slavery whites would agree. However, most of those who were opposed to the institution of slavery, still did not acknowledge Black humanity. Anti-slavery was bad, but still Blacks were considered inferior beings. Thus, Cugoano's treatise on political theory, like Waman's *Buen Gobierno*, created a spatial epistemic break; a de-colonial shift within the monotopic reason of Western liberals of the time.

Cugoano performed for Africanity a task similar to what Waman Puma performed for Indianity, in the sense that they both require a history of humanity that is not built on what Cugoano termed "racial slavery" (in the precise sense that in Greece and after, slavery was not based on racial discrimination). Both, Waman Puma and Cugoano, linked identity with epistemology and their own geo-historical location. For Cugoano, observed Bogues.

Historical analysis was an important element in Cugoano's writing because the construction of racial oppression required a theory of human history and origins that justified the so-called inferiority of the African. Overturning racial conceptions of human history required an alternative historical discourse that could support alternative ideas of "natural liberty" and "common humanity" (Bogues, p. 40).

"Natural liberty" and "common humanity" were expressions used by those opposed to slavery and by honest liberals of the time. This, of course, is an important difference in the vocabulary used by Cugoano and by Waman,

since Waman did not have at his disposal the vocabulary created by British philosophers to theorize about Human Understanding and Human Beings.

Bogues reminds us about the influential texts of the first half of the eighteenth century: George Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710); David Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748); and Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man* (1734). The titles of these essays suggest that only a single concept of knowledge and Man exists. Furthermore, all of them exemplify the moment in which the Theo-politics of knowledge is being displaced by the Ego-politics of knowledge. These texts are precisely what bring together "knowledge, understanding and Man." Human Understanding, Principles of Knowledge and Man are all entangled together under the presupposition that Human and Man are what European males think Humanity and Man are; and it is this Man whom is endowed with specific Principles of Knowledge and of Reason. We also know that at this junction of European history, around hundred years after René Descartes, Christianity and Theology did not vanish. They just took second stage. In this regard, all of these texts are wonderful examples of the transition, in the internal history of European ideas, between the Theo- and the Ego-politics of knowledge. Waman Puma, on the contrary, was immersed in the dominance of theology, but he helped introduce the de-colonial epistemic shift; to introduce the right of the colonial subject to epistemology, that is, to a de-colonial concept of Man, of knowledge and of understanding.

3

Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past* (1995) is an important contribution to the de-colonial epistemic shift I have introduced through the Ottobah Cugoano's work and Anthony Bogues's reading of it. By de-colonial epistemic shift I mean the shift from the Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge to the Geo- and Body-politics of knowledge. It is a spatial epistemic break, so to speak, irreducible to the linear, chronological and monotopic epistemic breaks or paradigmatic changes in the history of ideas internal to Europe. Finally, the de-colonial epistemic shift operates from projects of liberation, and from the imperial allocations of identity to which colonial subjects have been—and continue to be—evaluated and humiliated.

Silencing the Past, as Trouillot repeatedly stated in his other writings and lectures, is an attempt to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation. It is true that Trouillot's argument could be read and interpreted within the parameters of historiography, as a discipline. And, in a sense, this was part of Trouillot's goals. However, the challenge to historiography is not within the same term of historiography itself, but from its exteriority: that is, from the epistemic location that the construction of historiography as a discipline, from the Greeks to the European Renaissance to G. W. F. Hegel and Reinhart Koselleck, left out as non-history (myths, memories of the subaltern and of inferior races, legends, oral narratives beyond the rigorous norms of scientific historiography, etc.). Trouillot locates

his argument at this junction, at the intersection of the formation and reproduction of imperial historiography and what this historiography has to leave out in order to maintain its imperialism.¹ Of course, imperial history can also tell the histories of the variegated masses of colonial subalterns (that is, racialized and patriarchalized subalterns). What imperial histories (from left, right and center) have more difficulty acknowledging, is *if* history is the question, *then* there are many memories from where *history* can and shall be narrated, beyond the principles and magical beliefs in one universal history based on the memories of one kind of people, the one often referred as Western Civilization, of which imperial Latinity is a very important component.

One of Trouillot's key concepts, is that of the "unthinkable."² The unthinkable, is the consequence of the production of silences and the production of absences in the rhetoric of modernity; that is, in the self-historical portrait of the triumphal march of Western civilization. In order to sustain the narrative of that march, the rhetoric of modernity needs to hide the logic of coloniality necessary for progress and modernity. The rhetoric of modernity needs to tell the story in such a way that historical events as the Haitian revolution shall not be placed next to the American and the French revolutions. In the rhetoric of modernity, the French Revolution is a key historical moment, and the American Revolution a dignified rehearsal. But the Haitian Revolution was cast out of a universal history. That is, it was unthinkable as a "true" revolution in the modern (that is, imperial and European) concept of history.

Why was it an unthinkable event? Because it was a rational project and a rational process by people who were not supposed to have rationality. As it has been observed many times, Black people were not supposed to gain freedom by themselves but wait for the White Man to give it to him or her. That fracture, the border between those who have history and rationality and determining who did not have rationality and history, is the border that makes the Haitian Revolution unthinkable by the dominant paradigm of what a “revolution” is supposed to be, who are the agents, and what is the purpose. It was unthinkable from the frame of the imperial Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge. To make it thinkable, it is necessary to understand it from the decolonial shift toward a Geo- and Body-politics of knowledge.

Thus, the fact that the Haitian Revolution was an “unthinkable” event reveals that the coloniality of knowledge and of being goes beyond the good intentions of a given person (like any of the enlightened philosophers who championed freedom and emancipation). As I have already mentioned in previous papers in the Academy de la Latinite, Kant following Hume, challenges any one to find a Negro, as he said, that can be compared in his talent and capabilities with any White man (*Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*).

The enchanting magic of the Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge has been the naturalization of the hubris of the zero-point, the epistemic perspective that rules out any other

perspective and creates the illusion of permissibility of difference within “la pensée unique.” *La pensée unique* is not just neo-liberalism as Ignacio Ramonet has it, but the diversity within the hubris of the zero point, from the current division of scientific labor, of disciplinary formations to the macro-narratives dominated by Christianity, Liberalism and Marxism; all of them allowing for a diversity of internal oppositions: but oppositions in content, not in the terms of the conversation, as Trouillot’s repeatedly forced us to think and act.

How do you detach yourself from the magic charm of the rhetoric of modernity that—on the one hand—makes you believe that you have options and—on the other—it hides from you the fact that the options you have are all within the same logic? And if you engage in a different logic, you are cast as pagan, barbarian, *guerrillero*, terrorist, enemy of democracy, etc. Well, one way to do it is to de-link, detach yourself from the principles underlying the Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge and to engage in a different epistemic game, a game at the border between the charm of modernity and the pains of what modernity silenced, the non-existent, the unthinkable in order to justify epistemic imperial violence. And here is where the links between identity, Geo-historical locations and epistemology are relevant.

The epistemic rhetoric of modernity eliminated (toward the traditional, the mythic, the subjective and personal), “secondary qualities.” Two of those secondary qualities are the geo-historical and body location of thinking. By this sin-

gle move, European philosophers hide their own Geo- and Body-politics of knowledge and denied ideas, principles of knowledge, concepts of human beings from Geo-historical locations and body configurations that were non-European. But for a racialized person of the modern colonial world, both Geo-historical locations (colonies) and Body-configurations (racial hierarchies of humanity) are of the essence. These two principles are being contested from the unveiling of the logic of coloniality and, in consequence, through the de-colonial shift. Or, as the Caribbean Philosophical Association has it, through “shifting the geography of reason.” Indeed, it is not just the Geo-graphy of reason that is in the process of shifting, but also the body-graphy of reason. While Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge were put in place by white European men, the shifting—and therefore the de-linking—is being advanced by men and women of color, either in the peripheries or in the centers (e.g., “third world” immigration to Europe and the US since the 70’s), aware of the epistemic trap—and its political and economic consequences—of the *pensée unique*.

4

Where are we, then, on the question of “Latinity and Haitian Identity?” Summing up, I would say the following:

- Latinity emerged as an imperial identity or identitarian configuration; it unified a diversity of languages and nations of the imperial division between the

South and the North of Europe, between Anglo Protestant and Latin Catholic imperial interests.

- Africanity and Indianity are de-colonial identities or identitarian configurations. They unify the diversity of African diaspora since the massive slave trade in the formation of the Atlantic economy and the diversity of Indigenous people in the Americas, as we are witnessing today through the indigenous movements in Ecuador and Bolivia and above all through *The Indigenous Peoples Summits of the Americas*. The fact that Africanity and Indianity are de-colonial identitarian projects, doesn't imply that all Afros in South, Caribbean and North America should joint the project; the same with Indianity. And it doesn't mean either that non-Afros or non-Indians cannot join the project. It means, simply, that the historical conditions, the coloniality of knowledge and of being to which people from African and Indians descent have been subjected, engendered project of de-colonization, equivalent to Kant's claims for emancipation. This is the difference between identity politics and politics of identity.
- Latinity, as an imperial identity, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is constitutive of the imperial difference, internal to Europe, that was translated to the Americas: the Anglo Jefferson and the Latin Bolivar. Today, Latinity as an imperial identity is in confrontation with the Anglo imperial identity as

enacted in the imperial designs of the U.S. and more concretely by President George W. Bush with the complicity of Tony Blair. In this arena, Latinity is, today, a subaltern imperial identity.

- Latinity, as a subaltern imperial identity, should re-imagine its relations to de-colonial projects grounded in identitarian configurations. In this re-imagining, Latinity cannot be the guiding light of Africanity, Indianity and Latinity in the U.S. In the particular case of de-colonial projects linked to Haitian identity, it is Africanity rather than Latinity that should take the lead. The ideals of the Haitian Revolution could be reenacted in complicity with many other de-colonial projects from people from non-European descent. For, if a Haitian identity privileges Latinity over Africanity it would have to deal with the colonial matrix of power and the relentless history of what Ottobah Cugoana described as “racial slavery” and with the epistemic colonial difference that privileges Theo- and Ego-politics of knowledge over the de-colonial reason grounded on Geo- and Body-epistemic and political configurations of the modern/colonial world.

Notes

1. Susan Buck-Morss in her brilliant article “Hegel and Haiti” (2000) showed how indeed Hegel knew but silenced the Haitian Revolution; and she further shows how Hegel’s legacy is still alive in the liberal and Marxists reading of Hegel.

2. Sibylle Fischer, in her award winning-book *Modernity Disavowed. Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (2004) pushes Trouillot's thesis a step further to argue that the "silencing" was not because it was unthinkable, but because it was thinkable but disavowed. The difference is indeed important. But, in both cases the logic of coloniality and the coloniality of being and knowledge is what explains both the silencing as the consequence of being unthinkable, or as the consequence of being disavowed.