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## Dispensable and Bare Lives: Coloniality and the Hidden Political/Economic Agenda of Modernity

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## ***Dispensable and Bare Lives***

### **Coloniality and the Hidden Political/Economic Agenda of Modernity**

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**Abstract:** Walter Mignolo discusses how racial formations in colonialism and imperialism have to be understood in the context of the simultaneous transformation of Christianity and the emergence of the capitalist world economy. In his contribution he focuses on how Christian theology prepared the terrain for two complementary articulations of racism. One was founded on Christian epistemic privilege over the two major competing religions (Jews and Muslims), the other on a secularization of theological detachment culminating in the “purity of blood” that became the biological and natural marker (Indians, Blacks, Mestizos, Mulatos) of what used to be the marker of religious belief (Jews, Moors, Conversos, Moriscos). Mignolo also discusses the emergence of secular “Jewness” in eighteenth century Europe and how these developments were concurrent with Western Imperialism in the New World. He concludes that secular Jewness joined secular Euro-American economic practices (e.g., imperial capitalism) and the construction of the State of Israel by what Marc Ellis describes as “Constantine Jews.”

#### **I. INTRODUCTION: BETWEEN DISCIPLINARY/EPISTEMIC AND RELIGIOUS/ETHNIC IDENTIFICATIONS**

My participation in this conference-series (Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Indigenous Racism), as well as my own work on the subject, is and has been carried out by someone

who is neither Islamic in any of its varied ethnic configurations (Arab, Iranian, Turkish, Indonesian, Central Asian, or Islamic population in Western Europe or the US), nor a Jew, a Black or an Indigenous person. My experiences and subjectivities are only indirectly related to religious, national and life experiences of people who have grown up and been educated in any, or various, historical and subjective configurations just mentioned. I learned to see the world first

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Walter D. Mignolo is William H. Wannamaker Professor and Director for the Center of Global Studies and the Humanities at Duke University. He is an active member of the project modernity/coloniality/decoloniality and has been exploring the decolonial option as an epistemic and political avenue to overcome the limits of modern and Western epistemology founded in the Greco-Latin legacies and Western Christianity and its reincarnation in Secular philosophy and sciences. Among his recent publications: *The Idea of Latin America* (2005), received the Frantz Fanon Award from the Caribbean Philosophical Association in 2006. Co-editor with Madina Tlostanova of *Double Critique: Knowledge and Scholars at Risk in the Post-Socialist World* (2006). In collaboration with Arturo Escobar, *Globalization and the Decolonial Option* (2007). Co-edited with Margaret Greer and Maureen Quilligan, *The Black Legend. Discourses of Race in the European Renaissance* (2007).

as a son of European immigrants in Argentina, more specifically from Northern Italy. Later on, when I went to the university and through my Ph.D. I became aware that at the university you learn to see the world through a discipline, whatever the discipline is. That is, you identify yourself with a discipline and people identify you with the discipline. You see yourself and they see you as a historian, biologist, lawyer, sociologist, and semiotician. Through a lengthy process I learned to identify myself by the seventies as a semiotician (for which Microsoft Office doesn't have a word in its Thesaurus) interested in discourse analysis and literary theory on the one hand, and the historical foundations of epistemology and hermeneutics (which later I realized were Western ways of framing certain operations and procedures of knowledge common to human beings—and perhaps living organisms) on the other hand.

It was at the junction of this personal turmoil that *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (1995) started as a process of understanding the opening up of the Atlantic in the sixteenth century, “modern” imperial colonialism (that is European: Spanish, Portuguese, French, British), in contradistinction to contemporary and similar organization (cfr. Ottoman Sultanate or Quechua Incanate). I became aware, in the process of writing and researching, that people in the Valley of México living in the Aztec Tlatoanate, whether in conformity or dissenting (like the people in Tlaxcala, who supported Hernán Cortés), were compared—by the Spaniards—with the Jews. The comparison was twofold: on the one hand, Indians and Jews were dirty and distrustful people; on the other hand, “Indians” in the New World may have been a consequence of the Jewish diaspora. Jesuit Father José de Acosta collected, in his *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (1589) a legacy that goes back to the middle of the sixteenth century pondering whether “In-

dians” descended from Jews. Although he dismissed the possibility, he had nevertheless addressed an issue that was in everybody's mind. Acosta first dismissed the possibility of a connection between Jews and Indians because Jews had a sophisticated writing system from a long time ago while Indians were considered “illiterate” (in the Western sense of the word). Jews like money, Acosta points out, while Indians are indifferent to it; and while Jews take circumcision seriously, Indians have no idea of it. Last but not least, Acosta pointed that if Jews were indeed the Indies origin of Indians, they would not have forgotten the Messiah and their religion.

But then there was also the question of enslaved Africans. What to do with them? Early in the sixteenth century, Indians were considered vassals of the King and serfs of God. Consequently, they couldn't be enslaved—which legitimized the massive enslavement of Africans. Bartolomé de Las Casas supported, first, the dictum about Indians and Africans, but then he corrected himself and condemned slavery. Africa and Africans were already classified in Christian cosmology as descendent of Ham, Noah's cursed son. And that was not good for one of the meanings of “Ham” was “Black.” The conjunction of “cursed” and “black,” plus the fact that Ham's descendants spread through Africa and to the current Middle East, prompted the scenario for the British to describe Spaniards as “Blackamoors.” When Elizabeth I of England launched the campaign against the brutality of Spaniards against the Indians (known today as “the Black legend”), the Spanish were likened with “Blackamoors” underlining the close connections between Spain and Muslims from North Africa (Greer, Mignolo and Quilligan, 2007). “Moors” and “Black” were thus conflated as undesirable persons in Christian Europe and used to establish the *internal imperial difference* between England (a want-to-be empire) and Spain (a leading imperial force).<sup>1</sup>

Now what you have here is a messy historical configuration, the emergence of the racial matrix of the modern/colonial world; that is, of Western imperial capitalism and of racism as a necessary epistemic structure that legitimized at the moment the epistemic supremacy of Theology and, later on, the epistemic supremacy of Philosophy and Science as the ultimate proof of the empirical existence of “races” dividing the human species and ranking human beings according to their degree of humanity (ontology) and their degree of intellectual capacities and knowledge (epistemology).<sup>2</sup> However, the messy historical configuration has an underlying logical and historical structure: Christian Theology was confronted with equivalent and competing religions of the book (Jews and Moors); with people like Indians who lack religion and were victims of the mischievous and perverse designs of the Devil; with a complex population who descended from Ham and became a confusing mixture of “Blackamoors”—that is, not exactly Moors as Muslims and simultaneously Black who

<sup>1</sup> Emil C. Bartel points out (in her article titled “To Many Blackamoors: Deportation, Discrimination and Elizabeth I”), that,

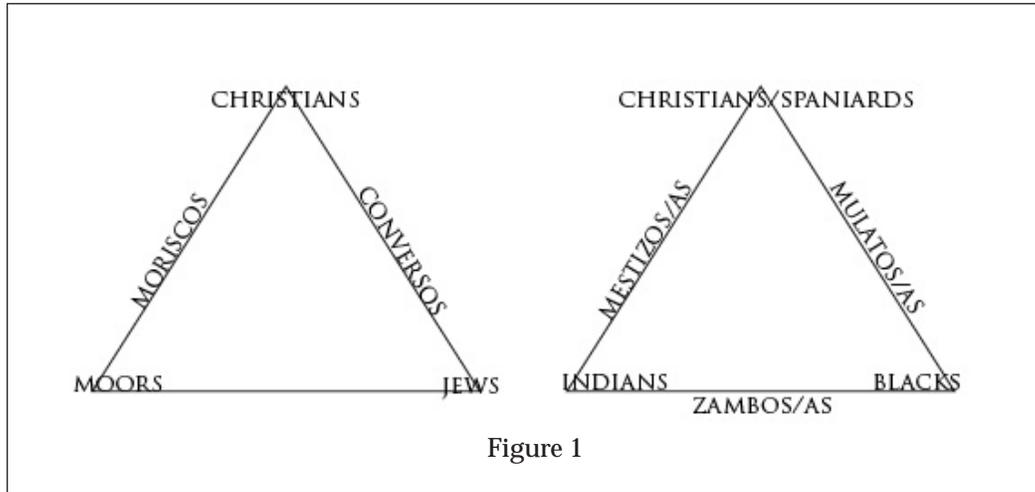
In 1596, Queen Elizabeth issued an “open letter” to the Lord Mayor of London, announcing that “there are of late divers blackmoores brought into this realme, of which kinde of people there are already here to manie,” and ordering that they be deported from the country. One week later, she reiterated her “good pleasure to have those kinde of people sent out of the lande” and commissioned the merchant Casper van Senden to “take up” certain “blackamoores here in this realme and to transport them into Spaine and Portugall.” Finally, in 1601, she complained again about the “great numbers of Negars and Blackamoors which (as she is informed) are crept into this realm,” defamed them as “infidels, having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel,” and, one last time, authorized their deportation. (*Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 46.2, 2006, 305-322).

could have been Muslim or not in Europe and Africa; and finally with “African Blacks” when they were enslaved, transported to the New World from different African Kingdoms, diverse in their language, religions and histories. The messy historical configuration entered, nonetheless, in a process of order and management through the creation of the Spanish Inquisition in 1505. The Spanish Inquisition contributed to clear up the field.

In retrospect, the racial matrix (and the historical foundation of racism as we know it today) is a combination of two structures, one religious and one secular. Christian Theology and European Egology (e.g., in the sense of René Descartes and Immanuel Kant) both provided the frame for racial classification and management of the population.

Let’s imagine two triangles (see Figure 1). One of them has Christian Theology/Christians at the upper angle of the triangle and at the base you see Islamic Theology/Muslims or Moors at one end and Jewish Theology/Jews on the other. Then you have “Moriscos” and “Conversos” to designate the “religious mestizaje,” the mixing of Christian and Moorish blood on the one hand and Christian and Jews blood on the other. That was clear in the Iberian Peninsula, or, if you wish, in the heart of the emerging empire. In the colonies, the situation was different since there was no religion of the book and therefore no

<sup>2</sup> Racism as an epistemological and ontological construction of imperial knowledge (Christian Theology and Secular Egology (e.g., secular philosophy and secular science), has been argued in several opportunities, following up on Anibal Quijano’s seminal works on the “coloniality of power.” Racism has been construed as *epistemic colonial* difference by devaluing knowledge beyond Greek, Latin, Christian Theology and Secular Egology (see Mignolo 2000, 2002) and as *ontological colonial difference* (Maldonado-Torres 2007) by devaluing non-Western people in relation to the ideal of Man both in the European Renaissance and European Enlightenment (e.g., consider for example the declaration of the Right of Man and of the Citizen).



theological-based knowledge, Christian Theology became more and more displaced by Spaniards or Castilian. And on the lower base on the triangle we have then Indians and Blacks/Africans. Religious blood mixture that engendered non-existing categories until then as Moriscos and Conversos, in the Iberian Peninsula, were replaced by Mestizos/as and Mulatos/as in the New World. But, while in the Iberian Peninsula the blood mixture between Moors and Jews was not accounted for (and probably physically not very common), in the New World the mixture of Mulatos and Mestizas or vice-versa engendered a new racial category, Zambos and Zambas. From here on, classification multiplied but all of them were displayed under the “purity” of Spanish/Castilian blood (Cástro-Gómez 2006).

When I convinced myself that logically and historically “race” was an epistemic category to legitimize *racism*<sup>3</sup> and that modern/colonial racism was a Western theological construction at the confluence

<sup>3</sup> This idea is further developed in the introduction and afterword, and illustrated by several of the articles contained in the collective volume, *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, edited by Margaret Greer, Walter Mignolo and Maureen Quilligan. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007.

of the expulsion of Moors and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and the colonization of the New World which brought Indians and Black Africans into the picture, I became aware also that my own subjectivity was formed by the history of European immigrants in South America and the Caribbean—by which I mean, not Creole from Hispanic descent since colonial times but European immigration that started toward the end of nineteenth century. And also, by my own migration to the US to become a Hispanic/Latino,<sup>4</sup> I realized that:

- a) Given the epistemic and ontological colonial differences that structure the imaginary of the modern/colonial world, I enjoyed (as an Argentine from European descent) “the privilege” (from the hegemonic model of Man and of Knowledge) of having an edge over the diversity of Indians and Afro-descendent in South America;
- b) However, in relation to the European and US model of Man and of Knowledge I was “deficient”: not quite Euro-

<sup>4</sup> I dealt with the complicities between Islamophobia and Hispanophobia in the paper presented at the first of these series of workshops, published in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VI, Issue 3 (Summer 2008).

pean (only European descent) and indeed not really White in the US. The Spanish accent colored me. Spanish language has been demoted as a language of ground-breaking and guiding knowledge since the eighteenth century, when French, German and English took over the leadership of Western epistemology. Knowledge produced and framed in Spanish language is today, in the European Union, less influential and less sustainable than knowledge produced in English, French or German—English, above all due to the imperial leading role of the US.

Thus, it is as a South American from European descent *cum* Hispanic Latino in the US (ethnic identification) and someone trained in semiotic, discourse analysis and literary theory, that I approach “racism” in the modern/colonial and imperial/colonial world.<sup>5</sup> The equation is relevant since I am not starting from the discipline to understand an imperial management of human subjectivities (through racism) but, on the contrary, I start from the subjective feelings of my own history and of those who are not immigrants in South America, but dissenting creoles from Spanish descent or Mestizos and Mestizas. That is, I joined forces with those who instead of using their privileges, in South America, of being from European descent (one way or another, that is, Creoles, Mestizas or Immigrants), take

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<sup>5</sup> By ‘modern/colonial’ I refer to the European, philosophical and political concept of modernity, countered by dissenting histories placing coloniality as the missing half of the story. Moreover, when I say ‘imperial/colonial’ I refer to both sides of the equation, imperial/colonial. Although modern imperialism (that is, Western capitalist empires) without colonies has been in place since the nineteenth century (e.g., England in South America and England and the US in China since the Opium War), there are no capitalist Western empires without *coloniality*. Thus, by imperial/colonial I mean *imperiality/coloniality*.

advantage of their privilege to join the struggles carried on by progressive Indians and progressive Afro-South and Caribbean Americans. I am not “representing or speaking for them (Indians and Afro-descendent).” “They” have been speaking for themselves for centuries. And of course, no one will accuse me of representing or speaking for them when the “them” in question are Jews or Islamic. I use semiotics, discourse analysis and literary theory as a tool to deal with the problem I just outlined. I am not using semiotics as a “method” to dissect “racism” as something that is outside of myself and that I can “study” through my disciplinary identification. I am not hiding myself under the clothing of disciplinary objectivity, as if disciplinary formations were not infected by the modern racial matrix or were epistemic formations outside of it.

I am here inverting the process and this inversion is indeed my methodology: the problem at hand is infected already by the racial matrix and there is no way to hide from this infection in any discipline (semiotics, sociology, political science, biology, bio-technology) and pretend that “racism” and “human being” or “humanity” can be described and explained from the uncontaminated eyes of God (theology) or eyes of Reason (egology). Furthermore, disciplines are a surrogate for religious and ethnic identities. Disciplinary identities are formed under the principle of objectivity, neutrality, reason without passion, mind without interference of affects, etc. Disciplinary identities are formed on the basis of a set of beliefs posited as detached from individual experiences and subjective configurations. However, disciplinary identities are no less identities than religious or ethnic ones.

From the sixteenth century on, epistemic and ontological constructions of racism had two major devastating consequences: the economic and legal/political dispensability of human lives. Dispensable

lives were and are either assumed (naturalized “feelings”) or established by decree (laws, public policies). Two human communities that paid the price of economic and political devaluation of human lives were enslaved Africans from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and German Jews in the twentieth century. Both histories are my own history as a human being; disregarding whether I am Black, Jewish or Argentine “from European descent.” However, as an Argentine from European descent I cannot be oblivious to the fact that the two communities in question were enslaved Africans and German Jews. Why so? When, by who, and how was such cosmology put in place and why did the cosmology in question “constructed” enslaved Africans and German Jews as undesirable, dispensable or unvalued human lives?

## II. DISPENSABLE LIVES, ETHNIC AND EPISTEMIC PRIVILEGES

My understanding of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust comes from my understanding of the racial matrix of the modern/colonial world. More specifically, it comes from my understanding of dispensable lives in a capitalist market-driven economy (particularly in the transformation of monopolistic mercantilism to free-trade mercantilism before the Industrial Revolution), coupled with the legal/political dispensability brought about by the formation of the modern-nation state in Europe. The first is the case of enslaved Africans and the second of the murdered Jews in the Holocaust.

Economic dispensability of human lives is a practice, and subsequently a category, that did not exist before the sixteenth century. It was put in practice during the massive slave trade and exploitation of labor engendered by the European discovery and exploitation of the New World. Dispensable economic lives have two comple-

mentary meanings. The life of an enslaved person is dispensable because once a given enslaved-body is no longer labor-producing it can be replaced by another enslaved-body. Behind the naturalization of economic dispensability were all European Atlantic imperial/colonial, merchants as well as the monarchic states (Portugal, Spain, France, England and Holland). Ottobah Cugoano gained his freedom in England, in the second half of the eighteenth century (after being enslaved in the Caribbean) and devoted several pages to the economic aspect of slavery and the dispensability of human lives in his *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (1976). One among many observations, strictly relevant to the economic aspect of dispensable lives, is the following:

The vast carnage and murders committed by the British instigators of slavery, is attended with a very shocking, peculiar, and almost unheard of conception, according to the notion of the perpetrators of it: they either consider them as their own property that they may do with as they please, in life or death; or that the taking away the life of a black man is of no more account than taking away the life of a beast.

A very melancholy instance of this happened about the year 1780 as recorded in the courts of law; a master of a vessel bound to the Western Colonies, selected 132 of *the most sickly of the black slaves, and ordered them to be thrown overboard into the sea, in order to recover their value from the insurers, as he had perceived that he was too late to get a good market for them in the West Indies.* (pp, 85; italics mine, WM)

Cugoano’s observation was echoed

some 150 years later, by a Trinidadian scholar and politician, Eric Williams. Williams recasts the making of enslaved Africans' dispensable lives and re-framed the legacy of the racial/colonial wound in a context that was not visible at the time of Cugoano. For Cugoano, Christian ethics was the weapon available to him. And Christian ethics serve him to build two complementary arguments. One about the barbarian attitudes he found in colonizers from Spain and Portugal to Holland, France and Britain. The other was the Christian struggle against the growth of economic horizons that transformed human subjectivities into predators that will go to any length in order to obtain economic benefits. Williams instead had the Marxist analysis of capitalism to replace the ethical dimension that Christianity offered to Cugoano. However, both Cugoano and Williams introduced a dimension that was alien to both, Christianity and Marxism: they introduced the radical critic of racism, which means the radical critique of the imperial/colonial foundation of capitalism.

A telling paragraph by Eric Williams (in his *Capitalism and Slavery*, 1944) brings together the bottom line of racism in the modern/colonial world and by the same token constitutes an opening to the de-colonial option that both critical Christianity and Marxism are missing. The de-colonial option has been opened by subjects who either suffered directly the consequences of racism (Cugoano) or its enduring legacy (Williams):

One of the most important consequences of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the expulsion of the Stuarts was the impetus it gave to the principle of free trade. In 1698 the Royal African Company lost its monopoly and the rights of a free trade in slaves was recognized as a fundamental and natural right of Englishmen. In the same year the

Merchant Adventurers of London were deprived of their monopoly of the Muscovy Company that was abrogated and trade to Russia made free. Only in one particular respect did the freedom accorded in the slave trade differ from the freedom accorded in other trades—the commodity involved was man (Williams, [194] 1994, 32).

Slavery, as a particular form of exploitation of labor, is consubstantial to capitalism. While slavery in the form it acquired in the economy of the Atlantic since the sixteenth centuries officially came to an end during the first half of the nineteenth century, it never ended in reality. On the one hand, not only did people from African descent continue to be enslaved; when they were not, they continued to be racialized and marginalized from society. On the other hand, a new form of slavery developed until today. More so, what never ended was the commerce of human bodies and, today, the commerce of human organs (Waldby 2006). Dispensable lives are those that become indispensable when they become commodities.<sup>6</sup>

It so happened that human agents who controlled knowledge and money had the authority (not necessarily the power) to classify and manage sectors of the human population. Their authority was an invisible structure that was nevertheless imprinted on their bodies and minds. That invisible structure has been described as “the colonial matrix of power” in its synchronic as well as diachronic dimensions.

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<sup>6</sup> The obvious connections between enslaved Africans in the early imperial/colonial Atlantic period and enslaved and exploited women, today, have made even the editorial page of the New York Times. See Bob Hebert, “Today's Hidden Slave Trade” at [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/27/opinion/27herbert.html?\\_r=1&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/P/Prostitution&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/27/opinion/27herbert.html?_r=1&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/P/Prostitution&oref=slogin).

The colonial matrix of power provided and provides legitimacy to constant processes of racialization decreeing human lives dispensable under the progressive and never ending face of economic growth and capital accumulation. For that reason, capitalism with a human face is either an honest utopia or a perverse lie. Good intentions to end *poverty* are misleading in the sense that the very concept of poverty was invented and introduced in the rhetoric of modernity to hide the fact that the *poor* are indeed lives that are dispensable and as such they are either discarded or when necessary made indispensable as labor force and consumers (*The Economist*, August 2007, the New Middle Class in Latin America).<sup>7</sup>

Another example, among many, are the Health Care Centers in the U.S. The New York Times (Sunday, September 23, 2007) reported the story of Habana Health Care in Tampa Florida. In 2002 the Habana Health Care was purchased by a private investment firm which bought, around the same period, another 48 Health Care Centers in the country. "Efficiency" and "Management" were put at work. There was an immediate personnel reduction; costs in daily life of patient's needs were also efficiently reduced. The cost the families of the patient paid was maintained. Consequently, patients receive less and less attention, several died as a consequence of careless attention, while the private investors increased their economic benefits. President George W. Bush was reported as defending the privatization of Health Care: "Democratic leaders want to put more power in the hand of government by expanding federal healthcare programs. It's so incremental a step towards government-run healthcare for every American." He

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<sup>7</sup> A good account of the "invention of economic poverty" (different from the religious sense of "poverty of spirit") was provided by Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1944, pp. 35-58.

added that federal programs would lead to "a European style government-run health care" (*Financial Times*, *World News*, on Friday September 21, 2007). If you put together the government-run "war" in Iraq and the government washing-hands on healthcare, you have two outstanding examples of dispensability of human lives in benefit of corporate-run economy and politics supporting it. It is also another good example of "efficiency in management" to reduce cost and to increase benefits on the dispensability of human lives. Thus, the brutal transformation of slavery in the sixteenth century and the Jews' Holocaust in the twentieth century are two outstanding cases of the "naturalization" of dispensable lives in a society in which reducing costs and increasing production and accumulation of wealth go hand in hand with politically saving communities from the "danger" menacing it (e.g., communists, Jews, terrorists, immigrants, you name it). These are the final horizons of salvation and the reason for living.

### III. DISPENSABLE AND BARE LIVES: COLONIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF BEINGS

Behind the history of slavery in the formation of the Atlantic economy, the foundation of capitalist economy and, later on, of the nation-state, there was something major, as I have tried to suggest. Slavery practiced on African bodies was the tip of the iceberg of a most fundamental perversity: human beings making human lives dispensable and transforming them into commodities. Five centuries later, Norbert Wiener saw the dangers in the domain of technology when he adverted to "the human use of human beings" (Wiener 1949). He was writing on the edge of the Jewish Holocaust. While Africans were the first victims of the economic side of imperial subjectivity, the Jews were the first victims

of the modern state. Human lives became dispensable in the domain of the economy and of the state—that is to say, as technologies for controlling economy and authority two spheres of the colonial matrix of power linked to racism and patriarchy.

Hannah Arendt provided a detailed analysis revealing the dispensability of human lives in the sphere of the political (Law, the State). Arendt's analysis is at once historical and conceptual. Historically, it traces the avatars of the Jews, in Europe, after they were expelled from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century. Although I'm not claiming that all Jews in Germany and Poland that were victims of the Holocaust were descendent from those expelled from Spain, I do claim a direct link between the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of the Jews, and the Holocaust. They are all logically linked to the colonial matrix of power; they are all different manifestations of the logic of coloniality. That the Holocaust cannot be explained through the history of Europe only, as has been perceived by Martinican poet, essayist and activist Aimé Césaire. Not only that it cannot be explained through the history of Europe but that, on the contrary, the Holocaust "reflected" on Europe itself what European merchants, monarchs, philosophers and officers of the State did in the colonies. Hannah Arendt also perceived the connections between the Holocaust and European colonization of South Africa, but her view was still "centrifugal" (looking from Europe outward) while Césaire shifted the geography of understanding and made his observation centripetal (looking from outward toward Europe).

Césaire (like Cugoano and Williams), narrates, analyses and conceptualizes coloniality at the intersection of the historical legacies of African slavery and Western categories of thought while Arendt does it at the intersection of the historical legacies of Jewish people and Western categories of thought. However, Jews and Africans are

differently located in the ethno-racial classification in the modern/colonial world based on Christian Theology and Secular Egology. In both cases, nevertheless, the conceptual analysis is embedded in the memory of a community of people degraded or suspected from the official rhetoric and sensibility controlling authority, economy and, above all, the principles of knowledge (e.g., epistemology). This is what Césaire had to say, being in France after WWII and close to the impact of the Holocaust. He suggested a detailed analysis of the steps taken by Hitler and Hitlerism since he (Césaire) suspected that such study will reveal that,

...the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that, without being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler *inhabits* him, that Hitler is his *demon*, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not *the crime* in itself, *the crime against man*, it is not *the humiliation of man as such*, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, *and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures* which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the "coolies" of India, and the "niggers" of Africa (pp. 36; italics mine, WM).

We should add the Indigenous, Native, Fourth Nations, Aborigines of Americas from Chile to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As for the analysis that Césaire imagined and suspected will reveal what he described in the paragraph above, was perhaps provided—indirectly—by Claudia Koonz's magisterial *The Nazi Conscience* (2003). Koonz observes that

What surprised Jewish Germans during this period was not the cruelty of kleptocrats, fanatics, and malcontents, but the behavior of friends, neighbors, and colleagues who were not gripped by devotion to Nazism... Germans who, in 1933, were ordinary Western Europeans had become in 1939, anything but. (2003, pp 11-12)

The telling lesson of Césaire's suspicion and Koonz's scholarly conclusion is how subjectivities have been formed under the naturalization of dispensability of human lives in the frame of the colonial matrix of power. During the period of heavy slave trade lives made dispensable for economic reasons implied that the people involved in slave trade or benefiting directly or indirectly from it, did not subjectively care. And if they did not care it was because either they accepted that Africans were not quite human or did not care because they were getting used to accepting the fact that there are human lives who are just as dispensable as human beings even though necessary as workers, be they enslaved, servants or employed at minimum wage and without health insurance, etc.

In the Holocaust (in which the main victims were Jews although other "irregular" people and citizens were also considered dispensable—gypsies as well as "Aryan citizens" alleged to have damaged genes or homosexual inclinations, shared a heritage, language and culture with their tormentors), were declared a "problem" to be solved (see chapter on Du Bois, titled "What Does It Mean to be a Problem?", by Lewis Gordon in his *Existentia Africana*, Routledge, 2000.). To solve the problem it was necessary to invent strategies (technologies as we say today) to eradicate them from the community, to make them non-citizens, to deprive them of all citizenship rights and once they were converted to "things" (but not into "commodities"), to

exterminate them.

Hannah Arendt offered the first conceptualization, to my knowledge, of a situation in which human lives become dispensable when they are stripped of the legal web that links people to the State, that is, that makes people citizens. Like Césaire, who saw the problems in Europe from his experience of colonial histories, Arendt saw the problems in Africa and Asia from her experience as a Jew in Germany. That is why Arendt's view is centrifugal while Césaire is centripetal: geo-politics of knowledge is crucial to delink (or to decouple) from imperial assumptions that categories of knowledge are one and universal; that is, knowledge is and should be centrifugal.

First of all, Arendt elaborates on the philosophical implications and shortcomings of the Rights of Man. Writing while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not yet stamped, Arendt's reflection is on the "Declarations of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens" that followed the French Revolution but was preceded by the "Bill of Rights" in late seventeenth century England and by "the Rights of the People" in sixteenth century Spain. These, however, naturally, are out of Arendt's horizon. In any case, her analysis of the Rights of Man is strictly offered at a time when the Universal Declaration was being written while she was completing her book. Arendt perceives insightfully that "man, and the people" have been taken out of God's tutelage and placed under the frame of Man: "The people's sovereignty (different from that of the prince)—was not proclaimed by the grace of God but in the name of Man, so that it seemed only natural that the "inalienable" rights of man would find their guarantee and become an inalienable part of the right of the people to sovereign self-government" (Arendt 1948, 291).

Arendt makes clear the link between the Rights of Man and the emergence of nation-states in Europe, after the French Revolution which has been relegated as a

forerunner in most recent Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What are the connections between both? Arendt points out that:

The full implication of this identification of the rights of man with the rights of peoples in the European nation-state system, came to light only when a growing number of people and peoples suddenly appeared whose elementary rights were as little safeguarded by the ordinary functioning of nation-states in the middle of Europe as they would have been in the heart of Africa. The Right of Man, after all, had been defined as “inalienable” because they were supposed to be independent of all government; but it happened that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them. (1948, 292)

Thus, the Rights of Man and of citizenship came together. One of the dramatic consequences (particularly today for immigrants in Europe and the US) is that lack of citizenship implies lack of protection. There are no instances in the Universal Declaration to protect people who are not citizens or who have been deprived of their citizenship. Stripped out of their citizen's rights, citizens become “legally naked,” bare lives as Arendt (and more recently Giorgio Agamben) conceptualizes it. Thus, dispensable lives are such either for economic reasons (commodity) or legal-state reasons (bare life). Multiplication of these two basic “technologies of death” can be traced geopolitically in Africa, Asia, South America and, lately, by US outside of the country: in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib.

At the time of writing her book Arendt

still believed that “Never before had the Rights of Man, solemnly proclaimed by the French and the American revolutions as the new fundament for civilized societies, been a practical political issue” (pp. 293). The problem here is a generalized one mainly among scholars and intellectuals whose sensibilities and subjectivities have been shaped by their dwelling in countries where the Glorious, the American and the French revolutions took place. Notice Arendt's unconscious move: she mentions first the French and then the American revolutions. Why? The chronological order has been displaced by the unconscious hierarchical structure of coloniality of knowledge and of being: within imperial internal differences, France (and German and England) comes first and the US in second place. Racism is pervasive, it operates at all levels. Furthermore, Arendt seems to be oblivious or unaware that Rights of the People (*Ius Gentium*) became a practical political issue in the sixteenth century with the European “discovery” and invention of “Indians” in the New World—another silence produced by the coloniality of knowledge and, in a way, a manifestation of internal epistemic racism, to which Immanuel Kant has significantly contributed: Spain, for Kant, as later for Hegel, belonged to Europe's South.

The history of “Rights” (of People, of Man and of Citizen, Human Rights) is substantial to and constitutive of the colonial matrix of power. Such a statement would be endorsed, today, by liberal thinkers and journalists writing in *The Financial Times* ([http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2007/humanitarian\\_action\\_can\\_mask\\_imperial\\_agenda\\_5832](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2007/humanitarian_action_can_mask_imperial_agenda_5832)). Arendt is correct in asserting that the Rights of Man and of Citizens, in the history of Europe since the Glorious Revolution (for her, the American and the French revolutions), is part and parcel of the nation-state building. What is missing in the picture is that British, American and

French versions of nation-state building have been made possible by the Colonial revolution initiated by Spanish and Portuguese monarchies in the sixteenth century. The Colonial revolution installed, in the New World, monarchic managements of the colonies by displacing and marginalizing the existing orders in the New World (Maya, Inca, Aztec) while disrupting (by extricating people from their communities) the existing order in Africa. Arendt perceived, however, that from the Rights of Man to the “the recent attempts to frame a new bill of human rights” (pp. 293; she is referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights being drafted while she was finishing the manuscript) there was still something slippery and hazardous in that:

[...] no one seems able to define with any assurance what these general human rights, as distinguished from the rights of citizens, really are. Although everyone seems to agree that the plight of these people consists precisely in their loss of the Rights of Man, no one seems to know which rights they lost when they lost these human rights. (pp. 293)

For Arendt the historical situation she witnessed in Europe, between 1930 and the late 1940, was unprecedented. Unprecedented was not the fact that many people lost their homes, “but the impossibility of finding a new one” (pp. 293)—a historical situation that prompted Arendt to compare it with slavery. And this is what she has to say about slavery:

Slavery’s crime against humanity did not begin when one people defeated and enslaved its enemies (though of course this was bad enough), but when slavery became an institution in which some men were “born” free and others slave,

when it was forgotten that it was man who had deprived his fellow men of freedom, and when the sanction for the crime was attributed to nature.

Yet in the light of recent events it is possible to say that even slaves still belonged to some sort of human community; their labor was needed, used and exploited, and this kept them within the pale of humanity. To be a slave was after all to have a distinctive character, a place in society—*more than the abstract nakedness of being human and nothing but human* (pp. 297; italics mine)

“Nakedness of being” (also “bare life” is another expression used by Arendt and picked up by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben), then, is not just the condition of losing specific rights, “but the loss of a community willing and able to guarantee any rights whatsoever...the calamity which has befallen every-increasing numbers of people” (pp. 297). Arendt concludes then that,

Man, it turns out, can lose all so-called Rights of Man without losing his essential quality as man, his human dignity. *Only the loss of polity itself expels him from humanity.* (pp. 297; italics mine)

We arrive here at the crux of the matter: dispensable lives and bare lives. Bare lives are the consequences of legal-political racism at work in and for the control of authority. Thus, the concept of *citizenship* fulfilled that role and insured the authority of the State to keep people in and out of it. Citizenship is a legal-administrative entity that was confused with the nationality of the person with his or her citizen number. For that reason, undesirable nationals (in this case German Jews), could be deprived of their citizen number because of their na-

tionality; being Jewish was not exactly belonging to a given religion but to a given ethnicity. Those who were born free but had the bad luck of being born in languages, religions, histories, memories, and styles of life that were not the norm of a given nation-state (say, Spain, France or Germany), may run into trouble. And the Holocaust was an extreme and dramatic exercise of the state controlling the nation(s).

Dispensable lives are instead the consequences of the racist foundation of economic capitalist practices: cost reductions, financial gains, accumulation to re-invest to further accumulation, are economic goals that put human lives in second place. Racism is a necessary rhetoric in order to devalue, and justify, dispensable lives that are portrayed (by hegemonic discourses) as less valuable. Once again, the bottom line of racism is devaluation and not the color of your skin. The color of your skin is just a marker used to devalue. Thus, human lives as *commodities* and the fact that slavery transforms human being into commodities, means that they did not just lose their rights but they lost their *humanity*. At the other end, the concept of *citizenship* served a similar regulatory function for controlling population. Thus, *it is not only the loss of polity itself that expels him (Man) from humanity*, as Arendt has it. Enslaved Africans have been not *expelled* but *pulled out* from their community. It is shortsighted, and self-serving, for Arendt to say that “yet in the light of recent events it is possible to say that even slaves still belonged to some sort of human community” (pp. 297), and to place bare life and the Holocaust above dispensable lives, human lives transformed into commodities.

Thus, both crimes against humanity—dispensable and bare lives—are ingrained in the very logic of coloniality. Certain lives become dispensable in racist rhetoric to justify economic control, chiefly exploitation of labor and appropriation of natural. Lives

are dispensable when *expelled from humanity not because the loss of polity* but because they are pulled out of their community (enslaved Africans yesterday, young women and children today) to become commodities. Lives become bare in racist rhetoric that justifies national homogeneity and ideal citizens. In the first case, *commodity* is preferable to humanity; in the second *citizenship* is preferable to humanity. Thus, we have here epistemic racism at its best, working toward controlling economy and authority—two pillars of the modern/colonial world which is also the world of imperial capitalism (i.e., the Ottomans could be described as imperial but certainly not as imperial capitalism) and Western Christian monarchies and Western secular nation-states.

This is the moment to remember Aimée Césaire’s view of the Holocaust. What counted for Césaire was “the application of colonialist procedures” to the “white man.” “Colonialist procedures” had been invented and implemented on people classified as inferior or out-cast—closer to animals than to Man or unbelievers, pagans, derailed by the Devil on uncivilized. Five centuries after the colonial matrix of power has been put in place and implemented in relation to non-Europeans, it went back to Europe like a boomerang. But this time not so much in terms of economy and the transformation of human lives into commodities, but in terms of the state and the law.

Dispensable lives and bare lives are subsumed—in the language of de-colonial projects that I engage in here—as two dimensions of the *coloniality of being*. You have to have the power of decision and action to be able to extract people from their community and sell them as a piece of furniture and/or to expel them from your community even if they were, like you, German citizens but Jewish nationals instead of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). Both have in common to be a consequence

of *epistemic imperial racism*.<sup>8</sup> In order to carry on such projects, you have to be able to make human beings to feel that they are not quite human like you, either because they are a commodity (or exploited like animals) or because they are made into illegal or criminals that do not deserve to be in the polity of citizens. Briefly, common to both the economic legacy of slavery and the political/legal legacy of the Holocaust, is the epistemic racism of the modern world: the *coloniality of knowledge*. The coloniality of being is a consequence of the coloniality of knowledge (see above). Consequently, decolonial projects have to start from the decoloniality of knowledge and of being, in order to de-colonize the economy and authority (e.g., political economy and political theory).

Let's now—after the clarifications made above regarding dispensable and bare lives—come back to Arendt's always insightful observations. For Arendt slavery became a crime against humanity when it became “an institution in which some men were ‘born’ free and others slave, when it was forgotten that it was man who had deprived his fellow-men of freedom, and when the sanction of the crime was attrib-

<sup>8</sup> This specification is important. There is a common argument that goes something like this: Oh, well, after all Blacks (or Latinos/as, Native Americans, Moslems, etc.) are also very racist. Yes, it is often the case, and it has to be analyzed. The starting point would be to distinguish between imperial and subaltern forms of racism, and go from there: if there are forms of Black and Latinas racism, be assured that they are not imperial!!! Imperial racism goes beyond (although it embraces) the particular nation-state (of Christian Monarchy of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries). There is a double dimension in imperial racism, which starts in the colonies and reverts toward the national imperial territory. We are witnessing this phenomenon today with the immigration in the European Union and the U.S. And certainly, the Holocaust was part of it. Thus, the pertinence of Césaire's observation inverting the directionality of Arendt's analysis. “Inverting” here means shifting the geography of reason, and thinking analectically instead of dialectically or in uni-dimensional historical terms.

uted to nature” (pp. 297). The ethical and political principle that freedom and sovereignty consists in the “no right” for any human being to enslave or disposes any other human being of their rights, was one of the crucial arguments of Ottobah Cugoano, in his *Thoughts and Sentiments about the Evil of Slavery* (1786). However, Cugoano's argument was out of the framework of European political philosophy, the genealogy of thought in which Arendt was dwelling. Cugoano articulated de-colonial political philosophy but, as a Black, African enslaved man, he did not have the ontological and epistemic privilege that would have made his cause heard. The crux of the matter here is also that it is difficult to claim the privilege of suffering, which is implied in Arendt's argument. Both Cugoano and Arendt were arguing for the same human injustices and abuses against humans. They were doing it from the vantage points of both their language of political philosophy (Christian for Cugoano, secular for Arendt) and their own experiences as African slavery and Jewish internal-colonial racialized subjects. My subjectivity is not embedded in African slavery or Jewish modern-colonial memories (since their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula). But I want to join forces with both arguments and, at the same time, eliminate the claim of privileging suffering, which Indigenous people in the Americas, New Zealand and Australia also have. And of course we can extend the list.

There are historical reasons in the formation and transformation of the modern/colonial world that made possible for Jews in Europe to have access to education and to participation in the public sphere before racialized minorities in the colonies. Great thinkers like Spinoza, Marx, Freud, the early Frankfurt School, etc., were able to protest in the political and epistemic domains. Africans and Afro-Caribbeans were delayed in the process. W.E.B. Dubois, in the US in the first half of the twentieth cen-

ture and the great congregation of Africans and Afro-Caribbean thinkers around *Présence Africaine*, in the fifties, launched a powerful collective discourse of which CLR James, Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, among others, bear witness. The historical reason *is* indeed the colonial/racial matrix of power as it worked in different global (e.g., national/imperial) designs—from the Spanish Christian Empires to the British and French secular transformations, to the post-colonial imperialism of the US. In the historical logic of the colonial matrix of power, indigenous people in the Americas, and Afro-descents in the Spanish and Portuguese ex-colonies, where left behind people from Afro-descent in the French and British Caribbean and in the U.S. The differential of course cannot be explained by the degree of intelligence of the ethnicity involved, but by the racial-ontological and racial-epistemic differences implicit in imperial/global designs—who among the racialized population, and why, had access to education? But it is explained also by the *internal imperial difference*: of the racialized population who had no choice but to learn the imperial language, those who fell under French and English imperial rules (and learned French or English) made a quicker and stronger intervention in the intellectual arena and in the politics of scholarship.

Let's move on and see how dispensable lives in the economic colonial order join bare lives in the political order of the nation-state.

#### IV. INTERNATIONAL LAW, LAND, DISPENSABLE AND BARE LIVES

Césaire's perception of the Holocaust, quoted above, bringing together dispensable and bare lives, provided the connection between the economic order (dispensable lives, lives as commodity—e.g., enslaved Africans yesterday; today,

enslaved women, traffic of children, traffic of human organs, etc., or those sacrificed to the economic and political order—e.g., invasion of Iraq) and the political order (e.g., the Holocaust). In the economic order, human beings are *pulled out* from their community and transported as any other *merchandise*. In the political order, human beings are *expelled from* their community and left *bare*, to their own destiny (e.g., refugees) or eliminated (e.g., Jews, Gypsies). Césaire's observation that the white man's burden, in the Holocaust, was to endure the crime against white people without necessarily noticing that Hitler was applying in Europe the same principles that Europe originally applied to their colonies (in America, in Asia, in Africa), brings together dispensable and bare live. The-interconnection between both comes together in Western cosmology in the history of International Law.

International law is an invention of the sixteenth century to cope with the realities of an unexpected enlargement of the world and the sudden awareness, for European state officers, merchants and intellectuals, of—for them—unknown people. While records of the Europeans' bewilderment and effort to accommodate into Christian cosmology those who were not accounted for in the Bible exist, records of Incas's and Aztecs's equal bewilderment do not abound. In spite of the unbalanced archival material from both sides of the spectrum (the diversity of European's reactions and responses versus the diversity of Aztec's and Inca's reactions and responses), we could confidently assert that both parties (in their diversity) tried to understand and accommodate the stranger into their own cosmology. However, European's imperial designs prevailed over the Incanate and the Tlatoanate, and knowledge in European languages (based on Greek and Latin) prevailed over knowledge in Indigenous languages (Aymara, Quechua, Aztec, Tojolabal, Maya-Quiché, etc.). And with it,

European subject and subjectivity took control of the colonies pushing aside subjectivities formed through centuries in Anáhuac, Tawantinsuyu and the Yucatan Peninsula—coloniality of knowledge goes hand in hand with coloniality of being and the formation of the colonial matrix of power.

Modern/colonial (e.g., from the Renaissance to WWII) International law was formulated first in the School of Salamanca. The debate on the distinction between *Ius Naturalis* and *Ius Gentium* was a concern already within Western Christians: the emergence of Christian Kingdoms (Spain, Portugal, France and England) contested the authority of the Pope and the legacies of Roman Emperors. *Ius Gentium*, in Francisco de Vitoria, for example, was necessary to unite Western Christians' dispensing at the same time of an Emperor and the Pope as "rulers of the globe" (*orbis*). In the same European context, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda published in 1529, *exortación al Emperador Carlos V para que, hecha la paz, con los príncipes cristianos, haga la Guerra contra los turcos*. One of the central issues of the debate was about just and unjust wars. The key issue here is that the debate was one sided: Ottomans and Muslims had no say in the debate that was from, by and about Christian "religious security." Muslims may have had something to say regarding the war and violence Christianity directed against them. When Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda extended his exhortation to declare war against Indians, this was not because Indians were menacing Western Christians and invading Spanish territories but, on the contrary, because Indians presented a difficulty for the peaceful expansion of Christianity. Sub-Saharan Africans were also not invited to the debate, even if the Portuguese had been invading their territory *pulling out* and enslaving a significant part of the population.

Modern/colonial international law came to light in the Christianity's double bind: to defend themselves in Western Eu-

rope and to justify their conquest of the New World.

Francisco de Vitoria's sustained reflections on *ius naturale* (natural right) and *ius gentium* (people's right/nation's right) and his concern with order as a way to achieve justice, were followed (without direct reference) by Immanuel Kant, in the eighteenth century, in his reflections of perpetual peace and cosmopolitanism. "Without direct reference" doesn't imply that Kant was cheating or that he was a dishonest scholar that plagiarized Vitoria. I am saying something else: Vitoria and Kant are in the same frame of mind, the same logic and subjectivity of modernity/coloniality and that is simply why Kant was concerned about similar issues two centuries after Vitoria and that is why (although he could have adopted a position closer to Sepúlveda or Las Casas) his view of things was closer to Vitoria. Instead, Marx (also indirectly) followed in a Kantian-Hegelian world the position adopted by Las Casas. And Donoso Cortés, when he wrote *Liberalismo, Socialismo and Catolicismo* (1852), followed the legacies of Ginés de Sepúlveda and placed himself vis-à-vis the legacies of Vitoria/Kant and Las Casas/Marx.

International Law is an integral part of coloniality: it legalizes the rhetoric of modernity while simultaneously enforcing the logic of coloniality. It was prompted by the "discovery" of unknown lands and unknown people; and by traffic of enslaved Africans to the New World. In 1979, U.O. Umozurike, from the University of Nigeria, published a report on *International Law and Colonialism in Africa*. The book was published by Nwamife Publisher Limited, in Enugu, Nigeria. Given the book-market and the trade-names of European and US scholars and intellectual, the book did not get much attention, beyond a numerical minority interested in the topic. In the 1990s Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui, an African political theorist based at John Hopkins University, followed up on the issue re-

viewing international law in the modern/colonial world from the histories of colonial Africa and the colonial experience of Africans. For the purpose at hand, here is a lengthy paragraph that would help us in unveiling the interconnections between international law, dispensable and bare lives:

As a constituent element of Western culture, the law of nations has been integral to a discourse of inclusion and exclusion. In this regard, international law has formed its subject and objects through an arbitrary system of signs. As rhetoric of identity, it has depended upon metaphysical associations grounded on religious, cultural, or racial similarities and differences. The legal subject, for the most part, has been composed of a Christian/European self. In contrast, the European founders of the law of nations created an opposite image of the self (the other) as a legal object. They materialized this legal objectification of non-Europeans through a process of alterity. The other has comprised, at once, non-European communities that Europe has accepted as its mirror image and those it has considered to be either languishing in a developmental stage long since surpassed by Europe or moving in historical progression toward the model provided by the European self (Grovgui, 1996, 65).

The simultaneous epistemic process of inclusion/exclusion, led first by Christian theology, later on by philosophy and science, and lately by political economy supported by political theory, of which international law was and continues to be a key instrument, is at the historical foundation of the modern/colonial world, of modernity/coloniality and of imperial

capitalism. Francisco de Vitoria in Salamanca, Spain, in the mid sixteenth century; Hugo Grotius in the Netherland at the beginning of the seventeenth century; and Seraphin de Freitas, in Portugal, critically responding to Hugo Grotius, constitute three pillars of International Law in the historical foundation of the modern/colonial world. Subjects whose subjectivities and sensibilities have not been formed by the European memories of Greece and Rome, of Greek and Latin, and by its modern imperial languages (Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French, German and English), began to be constructed, in the European discourse of international law, as *legal objects*. "Legal objects" have been stripped of their language, religions, families, communities, sensibilities, memories—in sum, legal objects became, for European international law, not only bare but above all dispensable lives. If non-European people were and are targets of commodification of human lives, they are also targets to be outlawed. As legal objects, non-European subjects had no say in International Law, unless they agreed with the terms stipulated by European law-makers.

Let's return now to Aimé Césaire. When he stated that Hitler had applied to the White Man what Europeans had previously created to deal with non-European people (excepting the "mediators" who played into the game of imperial rules, from the Africans who captured and sold other Africans to be enslaved, to more contemporary industrial and politicians in ex-Third World countries who sell their soul to IMF or private corporations in the US., France, Germany, Spain, etc., and open their pockets), international law was certainly implied in his dictum: International Law that served to convert non-European subjects into legal objects was now put at the service of the nation-state in order to legally expel non-ethnic Germans from the nation-state. Césaire made this statement in 1955. The statement (and his *Discourse on*

*Colonialism*) clearly shifted the geography of reason: international law was seen from the consequences of its implementation. Three years before, Carl Schmitt published *The Nomos of the Earth* (1952), in which he clearly stated the Eurocentered nature of International Law. Both statements, Césaire's and Schmitt's, occupied distinctive seats in the geo-politics of knowledge. Schmitt was not concerned about the colonies and the colonial world in the process—during those years—of struggling for liberation, but with the crisis in Europe and, more particularly, of Germany. However, Schmitt had to take European colonies into account. Césaire was not concerned with Europe and Germany, but with the colonized world and people converted into legal objects. However, he had to take Europe and Germany into account. De-coloniality of knowledge and of being starts from the shift that is illustrated in Césaire's statement. And it follows by recognizing the contribution, although partial, that Schmitt has made from the perspective and interest of Europe to critique Eurocentrism in international law.

## V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The larger frame in which the racial formation of the modern/colonial world has to be understood should take account of the context of concurrent transformations of Christianity and the emergence of the Atlantic economy—an economy of investment and accumulation of wealth (wealth of nations for Adam Smith) that we call “capitalism” (after Karl Marx). These two concurrent moments could be summarized as follows:

- a) The Christian detachment between God's heaven and people's earth; a detachment unfamiliar to co-existing “religions” such as Judaism, Islam, and the so-called (by Spaniards) “non-religions” of Aztecs and Incas in the New World; and certainly not among Buddhist and Hindus;
- b) “Secularization” was able to detach God from Nature (which was unthinkable among Indigenous and Sub-Saharan Africans, for example; and unknown among Jews and Muslims). The next step was to detach, consequently, Nature from Man (e.g., Frances Bacon's *Novum Organum*, 1620). “Nature” became the sphere of living organisms to be conquered and vanquished by Man;
- c) As Christian Theology became the privileged and imperial *locus enunciationis*, it prepared the terrain for two complementary articulation of racism, illustrated in the two triangles above. One was founded on Christian epistemic privilege over the two major competing religions (Jews and Muslims), a privilege founded on the detachment (I mean detachment and not merely a “distinction between the two realms” which was common among other religions, even among the non-religions spirituality of Aztecs and Incas) between God's heaven and people's earth. The other was founded on the “secularization of the theological detachment”: when the detachment between God and Man became secularized in the detachment between Nature and Man, then racialization was located in the “natural” markers of human bodies and “purity of blood” became the biological and natural marker (Indians, Blacks, Mestizas, Mulatas) of what was before the marker of religious belief (Jews, Moors, Conversos, Moriscos);
- d) The emergence of secular “Jeweness” in Eighteenth Century Europe transformed religious “Judaism”: the believer became, simultaneously, a citizen; a condition that was not open to other

“religions.” One, because Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus or Incas, were not European residents at the time and, second, it was the complicity between Christianity and secular Christian Europeans who managed to negotiate, maintaining imperial control, Christian believers with European secular citizens;

- e) Last but not least, all of these went hand in hand with the consolidation, during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of *homo economicus imperiali*. If *homo economicus*, in the West, could be traced back to the thirteenth century, *homo economicus imperiali*, in the West, is without a doubt the transformation prompted by the economic change of scale opened by the conquest of the New World and the subsequent massive exploitation of labor. Secular Jewness joined secular Euro-American economic practices (e.g., imperial capitalism). The major consequence of the complicity between secular Jews and Euro-American economic and political practice ended up in the construction of the State of Israel—what Marc Ellis describes as “Constantine Jews.”

Anti-Semitism today is clearly a consequence of the historical collusion between Western (neo) liberalism and secular capitalism, backed up by Christianity, on the one hand, and Constantine Jews,” on the other.