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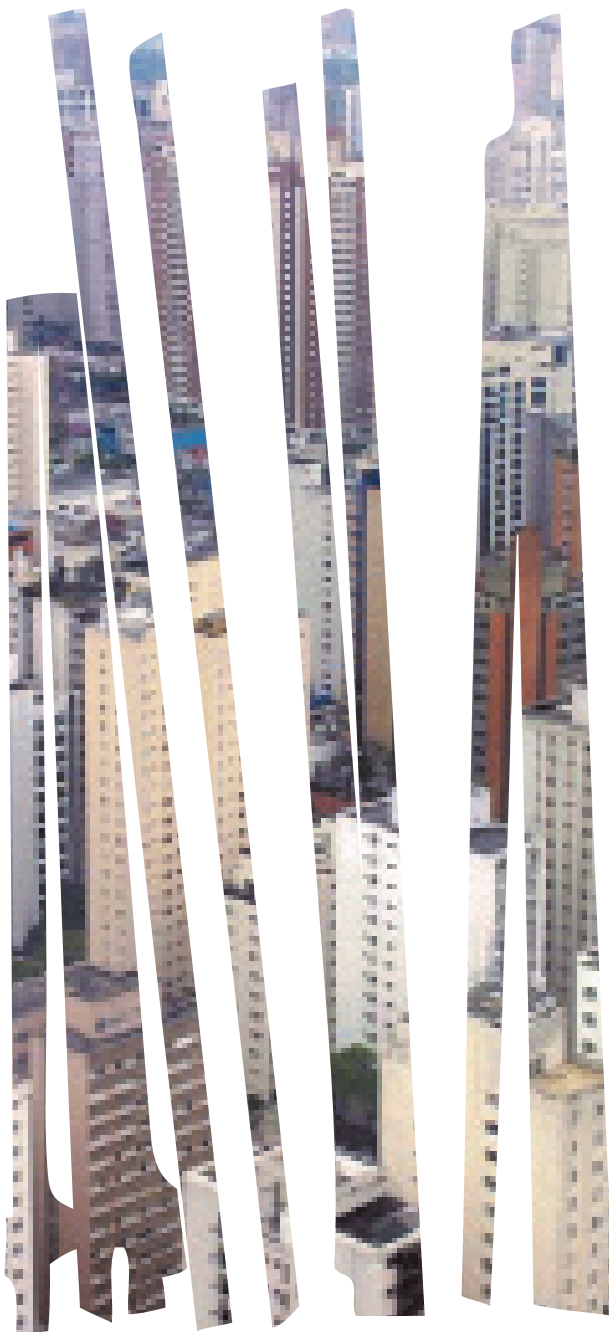
Differences of Inequality

Tracing the Socioeconomic, the Cultural and the Political in Latin American Postcolonial Theory

Ina Kerner

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Abstract

It is far from obvious which theories are the most promising ones for the task of critically addressing interdependent inequalities in Latin America as well as global forms of inequality that affect Latin American countries. In this working paper, I look at Latin American postcolonial theories in this respect. Following Nancy Fraser's analytic distinction of socioeconomic, cultural and political aspects of injustice, and affirmative as well as transformative remedies against them, I undertake a two-sided operation. In a first step, I use Fraser's framework to shed light on the accounts of inequality that we can gain from the work of Aníbal Quijano, María Lugones and Walter Mignolo. In a second step, I tease out in which ways these accounts transcend and thus challenge the framework used on them.

Biography

Ina Kerner is Assistant Professor for Diversity Politics at the Institute of Social Sciences of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She studied Political Science, History and Philosophy in Bonn, Quetzaltenango, Chapel Hill and at Freie Universität Berlin, where she later had her first teaching appointment in Political Theory and received her Ph.D. in Political Science. Before moving on to Humboldt-Universität, she was Assistant Professor for Women's and Gender Studies at Technische Universität Berlin and Visiting Assistant Professor at the New School for Social Research in New York. Within the last years, she has also been a Visiting Lecturer at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad and a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town. From October 2012 until March 2013 she was a Fellow at desiguALdades.net in Research Dimension IV: Theory and Methodology. Her work is mostly situated within the field of Political Theory; currently, her predominant research interests cover Postcolonial Theories and their integration into the Social Sciences, Feminist Theory and Intersectionality, as well as issues of diversity understood in a broad sense. She is the author of monographs on Postcolonial Theory and on intersections of racism and sexism (all in German) and the co-editor of volumes in the fields of Political Theory and of Gender Studies. Her journal publications include: "Questions of Intersectionality: Reflections on the Current Debate in German Gender Studies",

in: *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19, 2, 2012; "Tudo é interseccional? Sobre a relação entre racismo e sexismo", in: *Novos Estudos* 93, 2012 and "Más allá de la unidimensionalidad. Conceptualizando la relación entre el racismo y el sexismo", in: *Signos Filosóficos*, XI, 21, 2009; "Scales of Justice and the Challenges of Global Governmentality", in: *Public Reason* 2, 2, 2010, as well as "Challenges of Critical Whiteness Studies", in: *translate.eipcp.net*, 2007.

Contents

1.   Introduction

The inequalities that shape our current world are manifold. They come in a large variety of forms and entangle in various ways. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that critical assessments and theorizations of these manifold, entangled inequalities, as well as struggles against them, differ considerably among each other, as well. So which of the large variety of theorizations should we embrace when we are interested in illuminating interdependent inequalities in Latin America as well as global inequalities that in one way or another affect Latin American contexts? Which of the accounts on offer permit us to critically assess current forms of inequality in a way that is mindful of their complexities? Which theoretical resources should we draw upon when we attempt to understand not only what the factors are that put present-day interdependent inequalities in place, but also how the precise nature of interdependency, the form it takes on, looks like? Driven by these questions, in this paper I will look at selected Latin American postcolonial theories for the answers they offer: segments of the work of Aníbal Quijano, María Lugones and Walter Mignolo. All three authors address inequalities in Latin America in an intertwined way. All three of them are driven by basic insights into intersectionality. Furthermore, in considerably distinct ways, they draw upon as well as transcend dependency theory: Quijano by analytically connecting class and "race" issues, Lugones by further complicating Quijano's account by way of systematically integrating matters of gender, Mignolo, finally, by surpassing the "race"/ class/gender triad altogether.

But before turning to the inherently intertwined assessments of inequalities by Quijano, Lugones and Mignolo, I will focus on a very different theoretical approach: U.S. critical theorist Nancy Fraser's two- and later three-dimensional framework of justice in which she distinguishes and addresses socioeconomic, cultural and political aspects of justice and injustice. For the purpose of this paper, for two reasons Fraser's approach is of particular interest, even though – or maybe: precisely because – its direct frame of reference is rather movement politics and justice theory than the sociology of inequality. First, I hold that Fraser in fact does address inequalities, but does so in an indirect way, namely from a perspective that opposes them and tries to overcome them: In her theorizing, she either draws on activist claims for redistribution and/or recognition, or engages normative justice reasoning to identify the range of those forms of inequalities that have to be qualified as unjust, as well as those forms of remedy, of transformation and change, that promise to be most far-reaching and enduring. By this, she offers us a perspective on inequality that goes beyond mere comprehension, as it not only integrates questions regarding possible political consequences of the analysis presented, but critically looks at possible challenges and outcomes, at the strengths

and flaws of such consequences as well. Second, she tackles her subject matter by way of analytically dissecting it, by identifying and distinguishing its constitutive elements. Thereby, she manages to offer a heuristic framework of (the) major aspects one might want to have in mind when looking at a particular case of entangled inequalities in the attempt to grasp its scope and to understand its workings.

2.   Nancy Fraser: Elements of Injustice

In the mid-1990s, Nancy Fraser suggested to heuristically distinguish socioeconomic and cultural elements of current struggles against inequalities, which correspond to claims for redistribution and for recognition respectively. Among the purposes of this distinction was her intention to overcome what she perceived as a problematic split between socioeconomic perspectives on social justice (often, but not exclusively in the tradition of Marxist thought) and takes on social justice that were informed by either identity politics or by poststructuralist conceptions of the power of the discursive and the cultural; in other words, a split between economist perspectives on social justice and culturalist ones (Fraser 1995). Fraser's distinction, or rather her claim that socioeconomic and cultural aspects of justice and unjust inequalities should be addressed in conjunction, has been met with much positive resonance, both in the realm of social justice movements and of critical social and political theory (for the latter, cf. Fraser 2008a), and far beyond the U.S. and the rest of the Anglophone world.

In her framework, Fraser did not only suggest the combined discussion of redistribution-oriented and recognition-oriented approaches to overcome injustice. She introduced a further distinction that applies both to claims for redistribution and to claims for recognition: she distinguishes affirmative from transformative accounts. Affirmative remedies aim at "correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them" – concerning redistributive issues, this is "the liberal welfare state", concerning matters of recognition, "mainstream multiculturalism" (Fraser 1995: 82, 87). Transformative remedies, in contrast, aim at "correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework" – "socialism" with reference to socioeconomic forms of injustice, "deconstruction" with reference to cultural ones (Fraser 1995: 82, 87).[1]

In her more recent work, Fraser has considerably enlarged this framework – precisely in an attempt to overcome methodological nationalism, or, in her own words, "passé Westphalianism" (Fraser 2008b: 71), which had implicitly shaped her earlier framework.

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1   For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the respective remedies, see also Fraser and Honneth (2003: 13-128).

Based on the assumption that in a globalizing world, the nation state is not the obvious frame of considerations about redressing injustice anymore, Fraser has argued that the question of who is implied and should be involved in such considerations was now an open one and in fact a new problem of justice itself.[2] To be able to address this new problem, she has added the third dimension of representation to her redistribution-cum-recognition model: the dimension of representation. With her enlarged framework, she now allows us to focus on socioeconomic, cultural as well as on political forms of injustice.

Forms of injustice that concern the political are not uniform, though. Fraser distinguishes three levels of such types of injustice. The first level – already known with regard to the nation state and thus from Westphalian times – relates to issues of "ordinary-political misrepresentation" which refer to political decision rules that deny full political participation to some individuals or groups within a given frame (Fraser 2008b: 18f.). The second level of injustice, which became widely visible only with globalization, is "misframing" and refers to the way in which a political community's boundaries are set; the basic diagnosis here is that in a globalizing world, the nation state does not always serve as the appropriate frame for addressing issues of justice anymore (Fraser 2008b: 19ff.). The third level of political injustice, finally, concerns what Fraser calls the "grammar of frame-setting" (Fraser 2008b: 25) and consists in "meta-political misrepresentation", the failure to institutionalize "parity of participation" in deliberations and decisions concerning the "who" of justice, thus concerning the appropriate framing and internal rules of the units within which justice claims are to be taken up (Fraser 2008b: 26).

Against this backdrop, she again distinguishes affirmative from transformative modes of the politics of framing. According to her, affirmative politics of framing "contest the boundaries of existing frames while accepting the Westphalian grammar of frame-setting" – in other words, they accept the "state-territorial principle" but not the way it is applied (Fraser 2008b: 22f.). Such claims are expressed for instance by nationalist separation movements. Transformative politics of framing, by contrast, contest the idea that the nation state is the adequate frame for all issues of inequality and injustice. They hold that problems of transnational reach, for example problems stemming from the financial market, or problems related to climate or to drug politics, can precisely *not* be undone by nation state action alone. Therefore, transformative politics of framing aim

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2   One might question Fraser's assumption that the problem of the frame was a new one, arising only with late 20th century processes of globalization, and not a problem that already came into being in the late 15th century, when European colonialism began – even if, or rather: especially since current normative political theory answers to this problem and those answers that were developed and implemented throughout the last centuries by colonial administrations and later by the various actors of geopolitics, differ significantly.

"to change the deep grammar of frame-setting in a globalizing world" (Fraser 2008b: 23). This is to be achieved by supplementing existing decision making procedures tied to the nation state by procedures that transcend them. Fraser does not suggest a concrete institutional setup at this point, but rather introduces the "all-affected-principle" as a normative criterion for deciding who is to participate around a particular issue and who is not. To give an example, she speaks of "environmentalists and indigenous peoples" who claim "standing as subjects of justice in relation to the extra- and non-territorial powers that impinge on their lives" (Fraser 2008b: 25).

Taken together, what we can gain from Fraser's approach is a panorama of three distinct aspects of inequality – socioeconomic, cultural as well as political aspects – and six forms of remedy, of ways to overcome the aspects of inequality mentioned: for each aspect, an affirmative and a transformative way.

Table 1: Aspects of Inequality and Forms of Remedy according to Fraser

Aspects of Inequality / Forms of Remedy	Socioeconomic (Redistribution)	Cultural (Recognition)	Political (Representation)
Affirmative	Liberal welfare state	Mainstream multiculturalism	Separation
Transformative	Socialism	Deconstruction	Supplementation/ Transgression of nation-state frame

Source: Own elaboration based on Fraser (2008b).

If we set out to assess inequalities both with regard to the "entanglements between social processes at different geographical levels: local, national, global" and with regard to "the relationship between different axes of stratification" (Costa 2011: 9), Fraser's heuristic framework promises to decidedly help us clarifying both the scope and possibly relevant elements of what we look at when looking at social processes and axes of stratification. Nevertheless her approach does not answer all of the questions that one might have regarding interdependent inequalities. As already indicated above, with her clear normative focus, Fraser predominantly aims at identifying and qualifying unjust aspects of inequality and at assessing strategies to overcome them. Particularly in its more recent, globalized version, her account is in the first place a contribution to scholarship in the realm of global justice theory which aims at providing convincing

criteria for assessing why – or why not – a particular constellation should be considered as unjust, and therefore in need for change. Fraser seems less interested in also contributing to research on the emergence and on current configurations of entangled forms of inequality.

In this, she differs from Latin American social science scholarship on inequalities, which for some time now aims at combining structure-oriented approaches with approaches focusing on knowledge and culture, and which doing so focuses on socioeconomic aspects of inequality as well as on cultural ones – precisely with an explicit interest in the history, or one might say: the genealogy of the interdependent inequalities that are focused on. This holds particularly true for Latin American postcolonial theories, or, to use a label which is used by several of the protagonists of such theorizing in order to differentiate it from postcolonial theories stemming from or focusing on world regions different from Latin America, for decolonial thought. To outline basic premises of decolonial thought, in the next section I will first briefly characterize the much broader field of postcolonial studies, before narrowing it down to those aspects of it that are the focus of this paper.

3. Basic Features of Postcolonial Studies and of Decolonial Thought

Generally speaking, postcolonial studies comprise a diverse field of theoretical and empirical work that critically addresses long-term effects of European colonialism as well as the effects of comparable or related forms of imperialism. Postcolonial studies are undertaken with regard to former colonies – or, to use a term popularized by Achille Mbembe: to postcolonies (Mbembe 2001) – as well as with regard to former metropoles. Additionally, postcolonial approaches have fruitfully been applied to transnational relations and configurations as well as to countries and regions that were not directly involved in colonial endeavors themselves, such as for instance Switzerland (cf. Purtschert, Lüthi, and Falk 2012), but that nevertheless show traces of colonial modes of thought. So it is possible to say that the scope of postcolonial studies is worldwide and comprises the entire globe. Despite its tremendous range and considerable differences within this academic field, I hold that postcolonial studies share three primary concerns.[3]

First, they acknowledge that our global, postcolonial world as we know it is in fact the result of historical processes. This implies assessing, and taking serious, the influences of European colonialism on current forms of political, social and economic structures as

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3 For a much more extended take on the diversity of postcolonial studies, see Kerner (2012a).

well as on current patterns of thought; it also implies to take into account and to study contemporary re-actualizations of colonialism and imperialism. Thereby, postcolonial studies oppose all attempts at de-historicizing and naturalizing – for instance by means of ethnicization – forms of life or any other state of affairs. This applies particularly to the Global South, to the world regions that within Euro-Atlantic, or, in other words, European and North American thought have a long tradition of being de-historicized, naturalized and thus fixated.

The second major concern of postcolonial studies is a focus on global interdependencies and entanglements, both historically and current (cf. Randeria w1999; Bhambra 2007). With this, they challenge assumptions and accounts of autonomous developments, not only, but particularly in Europe. Thereby, they counter both modernization theories that locate the motor of world history exclusively in Europe, and notions of multiple modernities that in fact do acknowledge formations of high civilization outside of Europe, but nevertheless stress predominantly autonomous processes of the respective coming into being of this world's multiple modernities.

Third, finally, postcolonial studies critically assess and address North-South power relations and asymmetries. Doing this, they explicitly focus on discursive aspects, thus differing from some of the former materialist accounts of world affairs, insights of which are gradually being brought back in, though; therefore, one can say that particularly since what has been called the "materialist turn" in postcolonial studies (Procter 2007: 173), they attempt at looking at discursive and material, particularly economic aspects of global power relations in conjunction.

All three aspects hold particularly true for postcolonial theories stemming from, or focusing on, Latin America.[4] According to Fernando Coronil, who suggests a broad understanding of Latin American postcolonial studies as "research into and analysis of the historical trajectory of societies and populations subjected to diverse modalities of power", the field is characterized by bringing together the critical analysis of occidentalist representations of cultural difference, the study of historical transformations after political independence and the analysis of contemporary imperialism and its manifold

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4   It is noteworthy that many of the most widely read authors working in the realm of Latin American postcolonial studies teach in the U.S. This applies to Aníbal Quijano, who originates from Peru and relatively late in his life took up an appointment at Binghamton University; to his Binghamton colleague María Lugones, who grew up in Argentina but already received her academic training in the U.S., as well as to Walter Mignolo, who comes from the same country and teaches at Duke University; it also applied to Venezuela-born Fernando Coronil.

effects (Coronil 2004: 240).[5] Thus, it encompasses works by the dependency school and the philosophy of liberation as well as research associated with the Latin American Subaltern Studies group and with the *modernidad/colonialidad* paradigm. It therefore does not only combine socioeconomic, cultural and political aspects, but also does this in a way that clearly focuses on both the history of these aspects and, connected to this, the global context of inequality on the regional, national and local level.[6]

But how exactly are the socioeconomic, the cultural, the political as well as their relation conceptualized in these accounts? Which aspects of inequality are addressed, which ones are being left out? And how can the counter-perspectives presented, the ideas about how to best deal with, escape or fight inequalities, be described with regard to the selected accounts? In order to be able to answer these questions, in what follows I will particularly focus on the content as well as on the conceptualizations that can be found in the selected accounts of Quijano, Lugones and Mignolo; in other words, I will focus on the what-question as well as on the how-question of interdependent inequalities.[7] With regard to content, what is of predominant interest are the aspects, the factors, elements and effects of inequality that are mentioned by the respective authors. Which role is attributed, for example, to slavery, to global capitalism, or to neoliberalism and structural adjustment policies when looking at the creation of socioeconomic forms of inequality in Latin America? And which axes of stratification are addressed? What is the role that is attributed to issues of "race", ethnicity and religion, to gender and sexuality, and to class? Concerning conceptualizations, the primary question is how the aspects of inequality that are focused on are grasped and theorized. Here, we can draw on the conceptual vocabulary elaborated by Nancy Fraser, when we ask whether those aspects are assessed as socioeconomic matters, as cultural matters, as political matters or as all of the above; and when we furthermore ask whether the general take on these matters that is proposed in the selected approaches is rather affirmative, rather transformative or transcending this distinction.

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5 Occidentalism for Coronil denotes a mode of representation that "produces polarized and hierarchical conceptions of the West and its Others and makes them central figures in accounts of global and local histories" (Coronil 1996: 57). Such conceptions subdivided the world into separate units without relational histories, hierarchized differences and naturalized them and thereby took part in the reproduction of existing power asymmetries (cf. Coronil 1996).

6 For an overview, see the edited volumes by Rivera Cusicanqui and Barragán (1997), Castro-Gómez and Mendieta (1998), Toro and Toro (1999), Rodríguez (2001), Thurner and Guerrero (2003) and Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui (2008).

7 For an application of this distinction on questions of intersectionality, see Kerner (2012b).

4.   Aníbal Quijano: From Dependency to Decolonial Thought

As it is widely acknowledged, dependency theory, as it was developed from the 1960s, has always been a heterogeneous field of thought, combining a rather functionalist strand and a rather Marxist one. Aníbal Quijano, who was among the first generation of scholars working with the dependency paradigm, has both been grouped within the first of these strands (Puhle 1977: 16) and located on the middle ground between the two (O'Brien 1977: 38f.). Ramón Grosfoguel furthermore qualifies Quijano as one of the few exceptions to what he sees as a general "underestimation of culture" in *dependentista* analysis (Grosfoguel 2000: 367). In this light, it is indeed noteworthy that Quijano, unlike most of his colleagues, from early on emphasized the role of racism for the history and present of Latin American realities. He did this in the course of developing his concept of the "coloniality of power", which today is of tremendous prominence in decolonial thought, and has led to a number of accounts analyzing the coloniality of power-related phenomena, like "La Colonialiad del Saber" (Lander 2000), the "Coloniality of Being" (Maldonaldo-Torres 2007), the "Coloniality of Being/Power/ Truth/Freedom" (Wynter 2003), or the "Coloniality of Gender" (Lugones 2008). So what are the basic elements of his approach?

Against the backdrop of the characterization of postcolonial studies that I have suggested above, claiming that postcolonial scholarship is concerned with the long-term effects of European colonialism and with current forms of imperialism, that it focuses on global interdependencies and critically addresses North-South power relations, Quijano is an exemplary postcolonial theorist. Among the central elements of his analysis is Western imperialism, which he holds to be the successor of what he calls Eurocentered colonialism. That the former is introduced as the successor of the latter does not imply that Quijano assumes a full-fledged structural analogy between both phenomena, though. Eurocentered colonialism he defines as "formal system of political domination by Western European societies over others" (Quijano 2007: 168). Western imperialism, by contrast, was not an imposition from the outside, but rather "an association of social interests between the dominant groups ('social classes' and/ or 'ethnies') of countries with unequally articulated power" (Quijano 2007: 168). So in terms of political organization, both forms of rule differ considerably. As will become apparent, they differ much less with regard to how social power is organized within them. The lynchpin of this organization of power is dominant social groups: "social classes and/or ethnies".

The fact that Quijano at this point refers to two distinct categories of social differentiation, classes and ethnies, can be interpreted as an indicator for the question of what content

and which axes of stratification he holds to be the most relevant and therefore focuses his analysis on. For him, class relations – not only, but particularly in Latin America – are closely entangled with ethnic relations; it is obvious that this entanglement of relations is one that constitutes inequality. So how did this entanglement come into being? And how does it work?

As already hinted at, for Quijano the class-and-ethnic-relations entanglement originates in what he calls Eurocentered colonialism. Eurocentered colonialism established a naturalized difference classification system to support its power structure, to organize and rationalize the striking political inequality as well as the division of labor upon which it was based. The naturalized differences that this classification system produced were racial, ethnic, or national differences. What is crucial now is that Quijano holds that as an after-effect of Eurocentered colonialism, both naturalized racial, ethnic and national notions of difference, as well as forms of power and social discrimination such assumptions made possible, live on (Quijano 2007). And according to him, this does not only apply to the national level of Latin American countries, but also to the global scale, of which he thinks it to be

> very clear that the large majority of the exploited, the dominated, the discriminated against, are precisely the members of the 'races', 'ethnies', or 'nations' into which the colonized populations […] were categorized in the formative process of [colonialism's] world power, from the conquest of America and onward (Quijano 2007: 168f.).

In this light, in a later text Quijano speaks of "colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism as a new global power" (Quijano 2000b: 533). Here, the historical continuities that he assumes become overly apparent. For Quijano terminates the beginning of this "new global power" half a millennium ago, with the conquest of what today is Latin America. As its fundamental axis in accordance with his earlier work he identifies the racial classification of the world population; as its rationality he names Eurocentrism (cf. Quijano 2000b). Furthermore, he stresses links and mutual reinforcements of "race" and the division of labor in global capitalism; their effect was a "systematic racial division of labor", with both elements articulated in a way that they appeared "naturally associated" (Quijano 2000b: 536f.). Quijano himself suggests a historical rather than a natural explanation for how Europe managed to become the central site for the control of the world marked. For him, the rise of Europe was possible, next to its favorable geographical location, due to the influx of precious metals and other commodities from America, all of them produced "by unpaid labor of Indians, blacks, and mestizos" (Quijano 2000b: 537). Therefore, racial differentiations were indeed instrumental for

the establishment and functioning of the capitalist system of exploitation and the global distribution of riches. But according to Quijano's analysis, such differentiations were precisely not suggesting themselves due to differences in human nature, which further suggested a racial division of labor, as European race thinking itself would have had it. According to his analysis, racial differentiations were precisely constructed, imposed and employed in order to organize and rationalize such a system of exploitation and maldistribution.

Quijano's emphasis on Eurocentrism indicates that despite his focus of analysis being decidedly socio-economic, he also highlights cultural factors. In this light, he underlines that the beginning of the colonization of Latin America was characterized by genocide, "a massive and gigantic extermination of the natives", as well as by systematic cultural repression (Quijano 2000b: 169). These practices laid the ground for what he calls "the colonization of the imagination" – the establishment of European culture as universal cultural model (Quijano 2000b: 169). It is at this point that Quijano introduces the term coloniality – as the "most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed" (Quijano 2000b: 170). Coloniality can be understood as something like the after-life of colonialism following its death, as the prevailing of the logics that colonialism once established beyond its formal end. And with his emphasis on genocide and cultural repression Quijano makes clear that these logics were not established within terrains and contexts that before were void and therefore lacking any own logics and culture, but that colonial ways in the course of violent processes replaced pre-colonial ones.

As stated above, what Quijano has become famous for in postcolonial studies is his notion of the "coloniality of power" (Quijano 2000b: 171). Power here is to be understood in the sense of influence on the global scale. The coloniality of power thus means that contemporary forms of political and social power are tainted by colonial modes of thought and organization. Given that according to Quijano, "race" differentiations were at the core of the colonial order, the coloniality of power particularly denotes the global pervasion of racial knowledge, that is the institutionalization of such knowledge in the form of social classifications, the construction of identities based on such classifications and, finally, the continued organizing of the distribution of labor within world capitalism by racial knowledge (cf. Quijano 2000b). What with an eye on inequality is furthermore particularly noteworthy about Quijano's account of the coloniality of power is his affirmation that against its backdrop, differences are not only seen as natural, but also as always asymmetric. To the European or Western perception, Quijano writes, "differences were admitted primarily above all as inequalities in the hierarchical sense […]: only European culture is rational, it can contain 'subjects' – the rest are not rational,

they cannot be or harbor 'subjects'" (Quijano 2000b: 173f.). According to his analysis, the association of colonial ethnocentrism one the one hand and racial classification systems with global reach on the other hand produced European feelings of something like a natural superiority. In Europe's relations to the rest of the world, only the "Orient" had the status as Europe's other – while the indigenous populations of both America and Southern Africa were seen as "primitive" and thus devoid of any noteworthy cultural heritage. According to Quijano, Eurocentrism as a hegemonic perspective of knowledge is thus based on two founding myths: first, that Europe was the culmination of world historical progress and had something like a "patent on modernity"; and second, that differences between Europe and non-Europe were natural instead of "consequences of a history of power" (Quijano 2000b: 542f.).

As stated above, Quijano holds that concerning political organization and institution systems, the end of formal colonialism did indeed make a difference; to him, former and current forms of government are not the same. Nevertheless, he maintains that the coloniality of power had noteworthy effects on post-colonial processes of state formation in Latin America, namely detrimental ones. Generally speaking, he presupposes an intricate link between the modern nation-state and a certain degree of democratic relations, an association of processes of modern state formation and of democratization. This is because democratic participation functioned as a means of integration, or of "homogenizing people" (Quijano 2000b: 557); and, as it is common knowledge within political science, a certain degree of integration is a precondition for modern state formation. Against this backdrop, Quijano holds that since it did not imply processes of decolonizing and democratizing societies, independence in Latin America was not a process toward the development of modern nation-states. Rather, it meant a re-articulation of the coloniality of power over new institutional bases (cf. Quijano 2000b: 567).

So what are the remedies that Quijano proposes? What are the means against the continuous re-institutionalization of the coloniality of power that he envisions and suggests to embrace? Are there alternative modes and models in sight and if so, what do they look like?

With regard to the cultural aspects of the dismal panorama he presents his readers with, namely cultural repression and the colonization of the imagination, Quijano calls for "epistemological decolonization, as decoloniality […] to clear the way for new intercultural communication […] as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some universality" (Quijano 2007: 177). Western thought would by such a process be provincialized, to use an expression coded by Indian

historiographer Dipesh Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty 2000), and both challenged and supplemented by alternative systems of knowledge and morals in order to at some point produce true inclusivity. What according to Quijano would furthermore ideally come out of epistemological decolonization was the freedom "to choose between various cultural orientations" and "to produce, criticize, change, and exchange culture and society" – as part of "the process of social liberation from all power organized as inequality, discrimination, exploitation, and as domination" (Quijano 2007: 178).

In an essay dedicated to Latin American indigenous movements, Quijano refers these ideas to the complex relation of these movements to the state. As what he sees as their most promising aim, he mentions their call for the redefinition of the respective states they work within as plurinational (Quijano 2006: 214). This would imply no less than multiple citizenship – given that in the past, full citizenship status was often denied to indigenous peoples, who were treated rather as subjects than as citizens. Furthermore, such plurinationality would entail the chance to create new forms of democratic participation systems, at least on the sub-state level (Quijano 2006: 214ff.). So interestingly, successful indigenous movements as Quijano envisions them decidedly go beyond struggles for cultural recognition; they also address the political sphere of representation. And concerning this sphere, these movements do not only call for the *de facto* representation of the entire population, but try out alternative forms of democracy, as well. So they in fact do not only challenge the current frame of politics, they also challenge its current set-up.

Challenging the set-up is what Quijano wishes for with regard to the coloniality of power as well. In the course of a discussion of Latin American revolutionary projects, he argues in favor of the "socialization of power" – for him "a radical return of the control over labor/resources/product, over sex/resources/products, over authorities/institutions/violence, and over intersubjectivity/knowledge/communication to the daily life of the people" (Quijano 2000b: 573). These four aspects – labor, sex, authority and intersubjectivity/knowledge – for him are the backbone of any form of state power (Quijano 2000b: 557). It is noteworthy that with the second aspect, sex/resources/products, issues of gender come into his analysis. And in fact, Quijano has further elaborated on the impact of gender issues in an essay on the coloniality of power and social classifications. Here, he categorically distinguishes racial differentiations, which he convincingly describes as social constructs referring to phenotype characteristics without any consequences for the abilities of a person, from gender differentiations, which he refers back to what he conceives as "atributos biológicos diferenciales", of differences based in human nature (Quijano 2000a: 373).

While racial differentiations for him are the principal component of the coloniality of power, gender is only a side issue of his analysis. The coloniality of gender relations for Quijano comprises three elements, which all demonstrated the hypocritical base of bourgeois family values: First, that family and sexuality norms in the colonies allowed white men sexual access to non-white women, while white women were to be faithful to their husbands; second, that in Europe, female prostitution allowed for the sexual liberties of the bourgeois *pater familias*; and third, that the unity of the Eurocentered family was contrasted by a constant disintegration of non-white families, particularly among those people who were enslaved (Quijano 2000a: 377f.). Against the backdrop of current discussions within the realm of feminist analysis, it is noteworthy that Quijano clearly alludes to intersections, namely between "race"/class-entanglements and gender, or, to be more precise, those aspects of gender that he in fact addresses. But as in the next section on the work of María Lugones I will show in more detail, his take on gender is a rather limited one. For besides reproducing naturalized notions of sex differences, it restricts gender, as it is assessed with regard to its relevance for colonialism and global capitalism, to questions of white male sexual access to females and of father-son-relations, and thereby to matters of family, sexuality and reproduction.[8] Issues like the naturalization of gender, particularly of femininity norms, or the gender division of labor, are left out of Quijano's analysis.

5.   María Lugones: Bringing Gender In

Philosopher and feminist critic María Lugones has built on Quijano's work in an attempt to more deeply engender it, to confront and connect it with insights of feminist scholarship. Lugones in principle affirms Quijano's notion of the coloniality of power. Nevertheless, she takes issue with his approach to gender, which she holds to be inadequately reduced to the control of sexuality, its resources and products (Lugones 2008: 189f.), in other words to the organization and reproduction patterns of the heterosexual family. To Lugones, Quijano addresses gender issues in a way that is problematically biological/ dimorphic, hetero-normative as well as not systematic enough in its taking on board of intersectional insights. Therefore, all in all she qualifies his take on the coloniality of power as not being sufficiently gender-aware. She herself, by contrast, suggests a view that perceives gender and the coloniality of power as mutually constitutive; she thus posits relevant interdependencies not only of "race" and class, as in Quijano, but of "race", class, gender and sexuality. In this light, she assumes a "colonial/

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8   "La unidad e integración familiar, impuestas como ejes del patrón de familia burguesa del mundo eurocentrado, fue la contrapartida de la continuada desintegración de las unidades de parentesco padres-hijos en las 'razas' no-'blancas'", Quijano writes (Quijano 2000a: 378). Clearly, *padres-hijos* must not be translated as "father-sons", but can also be translated as "parents-children". Given the general androcentrism of Quijano's take on the coloniality of gender relations, it is questionable if the gender-neutral translation would be the adequate one, though.

modern gender system" with wide ranging subjection effects (Lugones 2008: 186). For according to her, colonialism did not only establish systems of racial classification, but also introduced Western gender systems in the world beyond Europe.[9] But importantly, it did not do this by an act of universalizing bourgeois European gender norms. Rather, it established a highly differentiated system of pluralized gender positions with very different arrangements for the colonizers and the colonized; to use Lugones' own words, it "introduced many genders and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing" (Lugones 2008: 186). The modern/colonial gender system that Lugones attempts at theorizing is thereby in itself a dual affair. For once, it has what she calls a "light" side, the side of the white heterosexual bourgeois family and thus the side of sexual bimorphism, complementary gender roles organized along the public/private split and of heteronormativity. The second and "dark" side of the modern/colonial gender system is, by contrast, constituted by the suppression of alternative ways of organizing sex, gender and sexuality. According to Lugones, such alternative ways flourished in various world regions before European colonization. What was put in their place by colonization were racist modes of dehumanization and exploitation of colonized females (Lugones 2008: 206f.).

Given Lugones' adherence to the work of Aníbal Quijano and the resultant large scope of her critical analysis – the colonial/modern gender system is no less encompassing than colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism, and in fact comprises relations of production, property relations, cosmologies and ways of knowing (Lugones 2008: 186) – it is almost surprising that her programmatic conceptualization of a decolonial feminism (Lugones 2010) is merely concentrated on the last of these factors, namely cosmologies and ways of knowing. It must be stressed that her declared point of departure for alternatives to the system that she opposes are "social organizations from which people have resisted modern, capitalist modernity", namely non-modern ways of organizing "the social, the cosmological, the ecological, the economic, and the spiritual" (Lugones 2010: 742f.). But once having started off in her search for points of resistance and decolonial strategies, she treats such alternative modes as holistic, non-contradictory entities; as modes of organizing the social that can already be fully captured with regard to the way in which they actually work when merely looking at the

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9   This was partly done by help of local men; Lugones speaks of the co-optation of colonized men into patriarchal roles. See Lugones (2007: 200).

cosmologies and ways of knowing that inform them.[10] She neither seems to count with possible tensions within non-western systems of knowing, nor with possible conflict within resistant social organizations; the multiplicity that she ascribes to communities that oppose the coloniality of gender is conceptualized as creative, not also as possibly destructive or at least debilitating (cf. Lugones 2010: 755). From her own perspective it therefore does make sense, and in fact shows a certain consistency, that Lugones concentrates her critical energy on the epistemic realm. What she seems to miss, though, is the fact that this concentration comes with considerate analytic self-limitations, since it might actually not be possible to really grasp and change all elements of the coloniality of gender by going the epistemic way alone.

What is undoubtedly outstanding about her account of a decolonial feminism is her clear attempt to not only critically analyze the coloniality of gender, but to do this by decidedly privileging the "perspective of subalternity" (Lugones 2010: 753) for the purpose of such an analysis. "What I am proposing in working toward a decolonial feminism", Lugones writes, "is to learn about each other as resisters to the coloniality of gender at the colonial difference, without necessarily being an insider to the worlds of meaning from which resistance to coloniality arises" (Lugones 2010: 753). Thereby, decolonial feminism almost inevitably becomes a communal affair.

So while for Quijano epistemological decolonization seems to be something that his own analysis can do without, but rather calls and thus lays the ground for, Lugones implies that epistemological decolonization was a prerequisite for decolonial feminism; and we might deduct that for any other form of decolonial critique, as well. While Quijano developed his critical approach coming from the grand theorizing of the dependency school, Lugones deliberately draws on feminist positions from communities that she would qualify as subaltern, among others on African, African-American or Native-American feminist accounts. Thereby, she attempts at bridging and at the same time undoing, or at least reworking, the colonial difference, which in the course of this process is to shift from being the organizing principle of the coloniality of gender to being decolonial feminism's object of critique. In this way, Lugones openly advocates for feminist border thinking (Lugones 2010: 753). It is not by surprise but rather by direct

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10 With regard to gender, this is exactly how Lugones explains her methodology: "I move to read the social from the cosmologies that inform it, rather than beginning with a gendered reading of cosmologies informing and constituting perception, motility, embodiment, and relation" (Lugones 2010: 749). At this point, she decidedly wants to prevent the mistake of reading gender into the social in an uninformed way, and thus in a way that makes it impossible to see gender options beyond the male/female-split (cf. Lugones 2010: 750). As convincing as this strategy appears, I nevertheless hold that her suggestion to read the social from the cosmologies that inform it underemphasizes possible tension within systems of knowing, and possible conflict within resistant social organizations.

reference that this resonates well with the decolonial program of Walter Mignolo's (cf. Lugones 2010: 751ff.).

6. Walter Mignolo: Modernity/Coloniality and the Decolonial Option

Walter Mignolo, currently probably the most prominent author connected to the *modernidad/colonialidad*-project, like Lugones draws heavily on Quijano. He employs the latter's notions of coloniality to argue that such coloniality was intricately linked to modernity; in fact, that modernity could not be understood without taking its underside of coloniality into account. Coloniality, for Mignolo denotes "the logical structure of colonial domination underlying the Spanish, Dutch, British, and US control of the Atlantic economy and politics, and from there the control and management of almost the entire planet" (Mignolo 2005: 7). While Quijano when reasoning about the coloniality of power is interested in tracing current after-effects of colonialism, particularly of the colonization of the Americas, Mignolo generalizes the idea of coloniality to name the logic of modern imperial power per se:

> In each of the particular imperial periods of colonialism – whether led by Spain (mainly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) or by England (from the nineteenth century to World War II) or by the US (from the early twentieth century until now) – the same logic was maintained; only power changed hands (Mignolo 2005: 7).

The domain of reference of this enlarged logic of coloniality, according to Mignolo embraces four aspects or realms, which in fact mirror the four aspects that for Quijano constitute state power, namely labor, sex, authority and intersubjectivity/knowledge. The realms that Mignolo mentions are first, the economic, in form of the appropriation of land, the exploitation of labor and the control of finance; second, the political, or the control of authority; third, the civic, which he holds to refer to the control of gender and sexuality, and fourth, the epistemic as well as the subjective or personal – here, he mentions the control of knowledge and subjectivity (cf. Mignolo 2005: 11).

Such coloniality, Mignolo holds, should be seen as "the untold and unrecognized historical counterpart of modernity" which can neither be disconnected nor undone otherwise (Mignolo 2005: xi). Therefore, he considers all attempts at "repairing" modernity, for instance of completing it in order to include all those who at some point in history despite modernity's universalistic claims had been excluded, as an inevitably futile endeavor that in fact could not but "keep on producing coloniality" (Mignolo 2005: xi, xv).

Mignolo in other words assumes that modernity's inherent problems were precisely not merely problems of exclusion from a generally good and principally all-encompassing framework, and thus of an inadequate actualization of modernity's universalistic claims, but the universal pretensions of these claims themselves, pretensions that reflected assumptions of moral self-sufficiency and thereby necessarily implied the de-valuation of non-modern, or rather non-Western moralities and epistemologies.

When Mignolo holds coloniality to be the untold and unrecognized part of modernity, he refers to modern self-descriptions from inside and outside of the academic world. Against such descriptions, as a source of critique of modernity/coloniality and of the encompassing control it entails, he suggests border thinking, a form of knowledge that critically reflects on the colonial wound, the damaging effects of colonialism, or, to put it more broadly, of colonial modernity. When introducing the notion of the colonial wound, Mignolo draws on the thought of Frantz Fanon – or at least on select elements of it. He refers to the *damnés*, the wretched of the earth in Fanon's theorizing, as "the wounded of the imperial/colonial world order" (Mignolo 2005: 108). According to Mignolo, from this perspective coloniality names

> the experiences and views of the world and history of those whom Fanon calls *les damnés de la terre* ('the wretched of the earth', those who have been, and continue to be, subjected to the standards of modernity). The wretched are defined by the colonial wound, and the *colonial wound*, physical and/or psychological, is a consequence of *racism*, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign the standards of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify (Mignolo 2005: 8, original emphasis).

Differing from Fanon himself, who despite his ardent critique of colonialism abstains from making general claims about the relation of European colonialism and modern European thought, Mignolo, by contrast, takes up the figure of the wretched to name not all those who are subjected to practices of European colonialism, like in Fanon, but all those who are in a considerably broader sense subjected to the standards of modernity. For Mignolo, the decolonial project – or the decolonial option, how he has now been calling it for several years (Mignolo 2011) – implies no less than the disruption of the discursive forms of coloniality and thus of Western modernity. This is to be achieved by challenging Eurocentric and modernist thought precisely with recourse to critical perspectives that take the colonial wound seriously and use it as a starting point for imagining a different, a pluralized world (Mignolo 2005: 156).

As already mentioned, Mignolo finds the intellectual resources for such an alternative mode of thought in what he calls border thinking, the work of theorists and social movements connected to the wretched. Border thinking for Mignolo is inherently interwoven with subaltern perspectives – to him, "alternatives to modern epistemology can hardly come only from *modern* (Western) epistemology itself" (Mignolo 2000: 9).[11] Border thinking entails and combines two major elements. First, acts of conceptual reclaiming and re-signification which are to counter the epistemic violence that modern/colonial knowledge produced; his example is the work of afro-Andean scholars who stress concepts of "ancestry" and "lo propio", one's own, against Eurocentric models of history (Mignolo 2005: 112f.); and second, *interculturalidad* in the sense of epistemic plurality, which in many countries of Latin America implies the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems. Mignolo's prime example for the setting into work of *interculturalidad* are projects of bilingual education, for instance the Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas Amawtay Wasi, an institution of higher education in Ecuador that is closely linked to indigenous movements and in its teaching combines Spanish and Quechua knowledge systems (Mignolo 2005: 117-128); or the thought of the Mexican Zapatistas that links Marxist categories to indigenous cosmology (Mignolo 2000: 140). To the Zapatistas' Subcomandante Marcos, Mignolo also attributes acts and a stance of "double translation". Marcos was a double translator in the sense that on the one hand, he translated local discourses from Chiapas to the Mexican nation and the global arena, and on the other hand he translated Marxism to the local population, in a way that Marxist thought could be "infected by Indigenous cosmology" (Mignolo 2011: 219). According to Mignolo, he thereby "displaced the model implanted by missionaries at the beginning of the colonial world" (Mignolo 2011: 219). For him, the Zapatistas put an act of "conceptual delinking from a master frame of reference situated in Western ways of thinking" into practice (Mignolo 2011: 215).

It remains unclear in this conceptualization how Mignolo envisions the relation between the two poles of border thinking, namely conceptual reclaiming and *interculturalidad*; even though it is most probable that he would assume some kind of productive, or at least friendly, co-existence, or to even hold acts of reclaiming to be the first step towards *interculturalidad*. Unfriendliness and other undesirable phenomena, like violence and oppression, are not on the radar of his thinking about modes of delinking from the Western frame; despite the fact that they play a considerable role in today's world, one only has to think of the Taliban. Mignolo exclusively looks at those forms of delinking

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11 One of Mignolo's prime models of border thinking is the writing of Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa, who in her bilingual and multiple genre book *Borderlands/La Frontera* portrays the U.S.-Mexican border as an open wound, as "una herida abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa 1987: 3).

that he finds politically promising, and can therefore qualify as decolonial.[12] This resonates with his abstaining from any critical assessment of indigenous knowledge systems or of other forms of non-Western vision. And this abstaining seems to be less due to contingent or deliberate neglect than to be a consequence of the premises of decolonial thought. In fact, Mignolo would most probably refute any critical assessment driven by external, for instance by universal normative standards, as being part of the problem, namely for being deeply embedded in what he calls the coloniality of knowledge.[13] And he would do this for three reasons. First, Mignolo is highly skeptical concerning any exclusive reference to "positive" aspects of European modernity, like for instance the affirmation of normative justice principles. To him, as long as they are universalistic, such aspects are irreducible from the negative aspects of modernity, its colonial underside. Second, he is interested in a recourse to border thinking and indigenous knowledge in the sense of what Michel Foucault in a lecture from 1976 has called an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" – as a return of buried historical contents and as a re-emergence of local "popular knowledge" that at some point had been disqualified as insufficiently elaborated, but that now, with its re-emergence, could become the basis of a locally grounded new form of social critique (Foucault 2003: 6f.; Mignolo 2000: 19f.).[14] In this sense, Mignolo sees in the perspective of those

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12 In his 2011 monograph The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options, Mignolo distinguishes five different paths towards the future, the relation of which he sees as one of "struggles, negotions, competitions, and collaborations", but also of one without a winner other than "the agreement that global futures shall be polycentric and non-capitalist" (Mignolo 2011: 33). The five trajectories are dewesternization, rewesternization, reorientations of the left, as well as decolonial and spiritual options. In his explication of the reorientiations of the left, he briefly mentions "radical political organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah", which together with "progressive Muslims" he characterizes as the equivalent of the non-European left (cf. Mignolo 2011: 43). But apart from this brief reference, his account of alternative trajectories to rewesternization appears to be inherently emancipatory.

13 Walter Mignolo has been repeatedly criticized for his reductionism – particularly with regard to his dichotomous take on modernity and its always already emancipatory outside (Domingues 2009; Sousa Santos 2010). Furthermore, the simplified take on gender that Lugones has taken issue with regarding the work of Aníbal Quijano can be said to also apply to Mignolo, who, not unlike Quijano, simply lists the "control of gender and sexuality" as one among seven elements of the "coloniality of power" (Mignolo 2005: 32), and on the other hand treats feminist considerations as a quasi-natural ingredient of what he calls "border thinking" (cf. Mignolo 2000: 267ff.). What is questionable about these contributions is not that they do address gender. Rather, it is the way in which they address gender. For they neglect the debates on intersectionality which question the simple parallelization of different forms of power and axes of stratification (cf. e.g. Roth 2013; Kerner 2009, 2012c), postcolonial considerations on the ambivalences of colonialism from a feminist perspective (cf. e.g. Spivak 1988; Narayan 1997), as well as Latin American (and Latin Americanist) feminist contributions that strive for a nuanced take on pre-colonial gender relations (e.g. Hernández and Murguialday 1992) or deliberately endorse liberal and poststructuralist, and thus "Western" thought (e.g. Lamas 2006). Therefore, such takes on gender clearly fall behind current debates in gender studies and feminist theorizing – and I hold that it might profit from taking some of these considerations and the ensuing complications on board.

14 For a harsh critique of Foucault's attempt to resurrect popular knowledge for its supposed disregard of the effects of ideology as well as of the power relation between intellectuals and the people, see Spivak (1988).

who have been silenced in the course of the making of Latin America the possibility of radical change (Mignolo 2005: xv). Third, finally, he attributes an inherent value to what he calls a "pluri-versity" of knowledge and values (Mignolo 2000: 222). To him, such diversity counters the hegemony of modern/colonial thought, and it does so independent of the respective contents of the differing forms of knowledge he wants to co-exist.

7.   Differences of Inequality and their Critique: Quijano, Lugones and Mignolo

As in the preceding sections I have hopefully been able to demonstrate, the foci of the approaches of Quijano, Lugones, and Mignolo differ considerably – despite the fact that they in one way or another can all be grouped into the field of decolonial thought. As I have already argued, Lugones' account of the coloniality of gender seems much less directed towards the socio-economic and the political than Quijano's account of the coloniality of power, since she deliberately addresses her subject matter from the side of cosmologies, and thus of the cultural; and in a way, something similar can be said of Mignolo's notion of *modernidad/colonialidad*, which methodologically privileges epistemic and discursive matters, as well. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Lugones and Mignolo, who both build on the critical analysis of the coloniality of power that Quijano has developed, do this in very different ways. While Lugones, taking gender seriously, decidedly complicates Quijano's account, Mignolo is rather interested in broadening it – and thus in making it more general, in making it to encompass all of modernity and any form of Western influence in the world.

So what do the three authors contribute to the what- and the how-questions of interdependent inequalities, what can we draw from their approaches when we are interested in understanding and possibly challenging such inequalities in Latin America, and possibly also elsewhere? In order to answer these questions, let me start with the what-question, the question of axes and factors of inequality, and from there lead over to the how-question, the question of how interdependent inequalities are conceptualized by the three authors. In a second step, I will address the remedies to inequality that Quijano, Lugones and Mignolo endorse.

With regard to Quijano, what is particularly noteworthy is the strong focus that he attributes to racism for the formation and the order of the world as we know it, which for him is a world structured by the coloniality of power and manifesting itself as colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism. Quijano holds racism, particularly racial classifications and hierarchizations on the one hand and global capitalism on the other

hand as intricately interwoven, and therefore at least historically as coterminous. He shows how a specific knowledge – namely of racial distinctions – in the course of European colonialism was institutionalized with reference to what within the logics of intersectionality research one most probably would call other axes of stratification; in other words, how "race", how ideas about racial differences, were employed to organize the division of labor and thereby became coterminous with class as well as with citizenship status. And this applies both to the national level in various colonies around the globe, particularly in Latin America, and to the configuration of geopolitics, and therefore to the global level. Furthermore, Quijano suggests that this link, or rather its primary instrument and effect, namely the racial division of labor, has historically often hindered democracy in Latin American states; for it was responsible for social polarizations too strong and too naturalized to allow strong democratic systems to flourish. With recourse to Nancy Fraser's analytic distinction of different aspects of inequality we can therefore stress that as elements and effects of the coloniality of power, Quijano identifies socio-economic, cultural as well as political aspects of inequality, the basis of which is the link of "race" and labor.

Lugones, for her part, follows Quijano's suggestion to analytically link "race" and labor, but stresses the importance of additionally, and systematically, taking the role of gender into account. According to her, colonialism did not only impose a particular racial order on the world; it also dramatically influenced the terrain of gender, understood in a broad way as encompassing naturalized notions of sex, gender norms, as well as sexuality norms. Likewise, according to Lugones, the coloniality of power, which consists of "race" and class elements, is intricately linked to gender. She therefore convincingly suggests that in order to understand the particular formations of interdependent inequalities shaping our contemporary world, a gendered analysis is crucial.

Mignolo, finally, does not focus on a particular set of axes of stratification at all. For him, modernity/coloniality is a form of power that affects all aspects of world society, namely the economic, the political, the civic and the epistemic. Compared to Quijano, Mignolo more strongly emphasizes the effects of Eurocentrism, though. While Quijano seems to be most concerned with the racial division of labor, for Mignolo, who in the diagnostic segments of his work draws heavily on Quijano's analysis, the focus is particularly turned to the colonization of minds and the imagination. This does not mean that his approach would only cover cultural aspects and neglect socio-economic and political ones. But not unlike Lugones, Mignolo addresses the socio-economic and the political rather indirectly via epistemic and discursive formations. For him, the struggle is one between entire, supposedly homogenous, systems of thought and

societal organization, and not one for improvements of distinct aspects of how in a particular society the socio-economic, the cultural, or the political is organized.

Given the complexities of our contemporary world and of the multiply entangled or at least interacting societies that constitute it, it seems questionable that the assumption of homogeneity can lead to entirely adequate assessments of our world and its societies. What is noteworthy about Mignolo's and Lugones' elaborations on Quijano's concept of the coloniality of power, however, is that they convincingly stress that matters of epistemology, knowledge systems and world view in fact do play an important role in shaping global inequalities, and that inequality matters cannot be reduced to issues concerning the economy and the division of labor or the political. First, because the hierarchization of the economy and the political is organized with recourse to epistemic means, namely racial and gender differentiations meant to naturalize and thus to legitimize inequality in these spheres, rendering such differences to be differences of inequality; second, because European colonialism, which institutionalized entangled inequalities on the global scale, worked by delegitimizing pre-colonial knowledge systems and replacing them with colonial ones.

So which remedy do Quijano, Lugones and Mignolo suggest? How do they imagine promising ways of undoing inequalities and in which ways do their accounts differ from each other in this regard? Quijano's ideas span from epistemological decolonization to a very broad notion of a "socialization of power", which would in fact combine measures of what Fraser calls socialism with far-reaching epistemic change. Concerning the latter, which refers to the sphere of culture, it seems that what Quijano favors combines measures of affirmation – the flourishing of non-Western thought, of what he calls cultural orientations and cosmic visions – with means of deconstruction, namely, of Eurocentrism and of the Eurocentric tendencies of European, or Western, thought. It remains unclear from his texts how Quijano imagines the flourishing part of this scenario, if he rather envisions a rehabilitation of subjugated knowledges, as does Mignolo, or a re-construction or re-invention of alternative epistemologies, assuming that colonialism has not left much pre-colonial thought entirely intact. Furthermore, like Mignolo, Quijano seems to attribute an inherent value to such knowledge, and does not show much interest in assessing it for ways in which it may itself stand for injustice, inequality, or a lack of freedom, for instance with regard to gender. What is noteworthy, though, is the way in which affirmation is meant to lead to transformation in the scenario that Quijano sketches, for he does not envision the affirmation of non-Western epistemologies in the sense of multiculturalism, in which the right to follow its own path is attributed to each community. Rather, he sees it as a potential source of intercultural communication and thus of moral interaction, which at least potentially could

lead to a new form of universality. It comes as no surprise that for such a scenario to appear realistic, the deconstruction of Eurocentric modes of thought seems necessary. At the same time, intercultural communication could lead to more deconstruction of Eurocentrism – for it made the existence of a noteworthy intellectual life beyond the Western world all too apparent.[15]

As shown above, Lugones argues in a similar way as Quijano on this point, and doing so even goes a step further, for she particularly underlines the communal prerequisites of decolonial feminism – the communities being necessarily heterogeneous, and potentially transcending colonial differentiations. In this, she clearly differs from Mignolo, who with regard to such acts of transcendence seems much more pessimistic and therefore decidedly more modest. Mignolo does not even attempt at imagining broad-scale social and political transformation, but rather believes in the co-existence of different political trajectories with their respective spheres of influence. In this sense, the decolonial option, the trajectory that he endorses himself, has a decidedly partial or local focus, as well. He directs his hopes to movements of particular communities that are engaged in border thinking and delink from colonial modernity in order to live alternative modes of being. He does characterize such an engagement as "epistemic and political projects" (Mignolo 2011: xv), which indicates that he does have more than cultural politics in mind when he argues in favor of the decolonial trajectory. Nevertheless, the politics involved here are much less state-oriented than, for instance, those in Quijano's approach.

While the latter clearly supports calls for plurinational states with multiple citizenship, Mignolo for the most part abstains from such demands to restructure nation states to be able to accommodate their entire populations, and to assure the participation of everybody. Even though he is not against such claims, he nevertheless asserts that "delinking shall take place at the epistemic level before confronting authority (e.g., state) and the economy" (Mignolo 2011: 315). Accordingly, such acts of delinking are where he concentrates his scholarly energy. In this sense, he places high hopes in movements, communities and world-views that co-exist in what he calls a pluriversal way and that may or may not manage to bring a particular issue to the forefront of state or even

15 Boaventura de Sousa Santos has introduced the notion of translation for describing such forms of communication. To him, the work of translation is the alternative to general theories. He does not want to give up on basic concepts of Western universalism, like human dignity. But he problematizes instances in which the West claims the monopoly for advanced theorizations of such concepts. Against such claims, he suggests the translation of basic concerns of such notions between different traditions of thought, for instance the Western, the Islamic and the Hindu tradition, which could by comparison potentially point to flaws in all of these conceptualizations. As basic precondition for such an act of translation he mentions a stance of theoretical modesty, and of interdependency: "The recognition of reciprocal incompleteness and weakness is a condition-sine-qua-non of a cross-cultural dialogue", he declares (Sousa Santos 2005: 18).

global politics. The prime examples he gives are the initiatives around the concept of *buen vivir* by Evo Morales in Bolivia and Zapatista self-organizing principles in Mexico. So with regard to Nancy Fraser's distinction between affirmative and transformative ways of addressing injustice concerning representation, the decolonial option that Mignolo favors is somewhere in the middle. From the perspective of the state, or of world society, with its local focus it seems to be mostly affirmative, but to come with transformative potentials; but looked at it from a local, a communal perspective, it promises far-reaching transformation. What is important to mention is that compared with Quijano, who aspires a new form of universality, Mignolo strives for the opposite: "The desirable hegemony is the hegemony of truth in parenthesis that defines the horizon of pluriversality as a universal project", he states; and: "The Zapatistas taught many of us that to change the world as it is may be an impossible task, but to build a world in which many worlds would coexist is a possible task" (Mignolo 2011: 44, 54). One can only hope that such worlds would be good worlds.

8.   Blurring Distinctions, Decolonizing Inequality Research

As I have attempted to show in the last section, the decolonial approaches that we owe to Quijano, Lugones, and Mignolo, address entangled forms of inequality in distinct and complex ways. Doing so, they in one respect or the other, and either directly or indirectly, cover socioeconomic, cultural, as well as political aspects of such inequalities; and they do so with transformative intent. The means and measures of transformation they suggest, however, at least with regard to cultural and political aspects seem to be rather affirmative than transformative in nature. Thereby, they mismatch, or transcend and blur, the distinction between affirmative and transformative remedies that Nancy Fraser has suggested – a distinction that assumes that a particular measure is either the one, or the other, but rather not both.

Table 2: Aspects of Inequality and Forms of Remedy According to Quijano, Lugones and Mignolo

Aspects of Inequality / Forms of Remedy	Socioeconomic (Redistribution)	Cultural (Recognition)			Political (Representation)	
Affirmative		Quijano	Lugones	Mignolo		
						Quijano
Transformative	Quijano	↓	↓	↓		↓
		← →				

Source: Own elaboration.

Against this backdrop, we can conclude that Fraser's distinction proves imminently helpful to identify when, and in which way, particular accounts of inequality seem reduced and thus incomplete, or, as in the cases of Lugones and Mignolo, either in their diagnostic or in their prescriptive parts privilege particular, for instance cultural aspects of inequality over socioeconomic and political aspects. Nevertheless, when applied to Latin American postcolonial theories, Fraser's distinction also comes to its limits, for it does not cover those moments in which cultural or political affirmation is not perceived as the goal, but rather as the starting point for further-reaching transformation.

There is another point at which decolonial theories seem to transcend and challenge Fraser's approach. This second point follows from decolonial theories' consistent global scope that leads them to perceive not only problems of representation as inherently globalized, as in the case of Fraser's, but also problems of redistribution and of recognition. To treat the latter as issues that predominantly occur and therefore are to be assessed within the realm of particular nation states is a legacy of inequality research that is not peculiar to Fraser's theorizing, but that is rather characteristic of Euro-Atlantic social sciences and the methodological nationalism upon which they are often based.[16] Latin American postcolonial theories, by contrast, deliberately

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16 As already stated in the introductory section, Fraser herself has departed from this tradition with the essays that constitute her book Scales of Justice. Furthermore, see her article focused on social exclusion and the "global poor", or rather the "transnational precariat" (Fraser 2010).

take the colonial history of current structures and configurations into account. Given that European colonialism institutionalized not only local or national, but also global relations of inequality, and that such relations comprise and combine socioeconomic, cultural and political aspects, postcolonial theories that address and tackle these relations can therefore be said to decolonize inequality research; that is, to point to its analytic restrictions and to the forms of inequality it precisely leaves unaddressed by restricting its analytic focus. They might not address and problematize all there is to be addressed and problematized with regard to the socioeconomic, the cultural and the political aspects of differences of inequality as such; nevertheless, their contribution seems indispensable.

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