Hemispheric Domains: 1898 and the Origins of Latin Americanism

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Wordlings

Today, many of the barracks and military commissaries that line Gailard Avenue are almost empty, cleared of the supplies and soldiers that once occupied them. A humid breeze brushes by, pregnant with resignation and abandonment. Until recently, Fort Clayton had been one of the centres of the North American military presence in the Panama Canal. Now neither the corps of military engineers nor the high officials of the Southern Command are accountable for the buildings and remnants of military supplies strewn along Gailard Avenue, archaeological pieces of another time.

The cut-off date for the US Army to fully comply with the conditions stipulated by the Carter-Torrijos Treaty in 1977, i.e. 1999, has come and gone. These stipulations effectively transferred this property—not to mention the inter-oceanic administration of the Panama Canal—to the Panamanian government.1 At the time of the treaty’s conception, General Omar Torrijos feared that the very sovereignty of the national (Panamanian) state was at stake. Perhaps this is the reason he failed to consider certain details of the transfer: what his government would have to do, for example, with the useless weight of the trucks and military jeeps parked on the side streets of the old Clayton base. One needs to bear such details in mind to imagine why the Southern Command rendered US$370 million dollars to the Panamanian economy in repayment for the US withdrawal, a whopping 8% of Panama’s gross national product.2 Even more uncertain (and less ascertainable) is the fate of the local and informal economies—the cottage garment industries, food production, domestic services and prostitution, to take a number of examples—that have proliferated around the military complex since 1900. It was then that Theodore Roosevelt identified the Panama Canal as the very heart of a new aperture for the United States into the Caribbean, South America, the Pacific, and a new planetary order.3

The times have changed; and the maps have changed colours. After the end of the Cold War, the military presence in the Canal no longer had the same meaning that it might have had throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, when it was in effect considered essential to both the ‘security’ of North American hegemony in the central zone of the Caribbean, and to the expansion...
of finance capital and global trade. Hence the marked contrast between the Utopian dreams elaborated around the techno-medico-military-financial apparatus of the Canal at the time of its inauguration in 1914, and the recent abandonment of Fort Clayton, where the grass grows to almost seven feet today. Perhaps the traveller who reported such a sight meant to suggest that after the North American withdrawal from the Isthmus of Panama, the same forest that had been contained for almost a century—dominated without respite by engineering and tropical medicine in a permanent war against the mosquitoes, yellow fever and malaria—has imputuously returned.4

It was in Panama that the new colonial science of tropical medicine was institutionalized, committed to proving to the world that 'even the most remote tropical localities would soon be centers of white civilization, as powerful and cultured as every other that exists in the temperate zones'.5 Of course, the genealogy of this science brings us to the Spanish American War, particularly in Cuba, where the insect bites and terror of contagion wreaked more havoc and caused more deaths among the North American soldiers than the weapons of the Spanish army. The taking of San Juan Hill in Santiago, Cuba, may have brought into relief the symbolic dimension of military heroism but it distracts us from that more minimalist (and certainly in the long run more decisive) scenario involving the war against the mosquitoes in the history of medico-military colonization inaugurated in the Spanish-American War. For this war was also a bio-war without precedent in the history of imperialism, in that it placed hygiene and public health at the very heart of colonial discourse, deploying new forms of domination based on the administration of bodies.6

It was this war that continued long after Roosevelt and the Rough Riders victoriously withdrew from Cuba. The medico-military complex founded new Departments of Health in Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico, and immediately extended its dominion to Panama. Here, the construction of the Canal was made possible (at least in part) by the intense and successful intervention of tropical medicine under the charge of Colonel W.C. Gorgas, an 1898 war veteran.7 Colonel Gorgas is thus an emblematic figure of a complex colonial apparatus, a point of intersection among financial and technological interests, military and medical knowledges—all of which lead us to place both the war of 1898 and the construction of the Panama Canal in the wider context of a new worlding of the world, a new planetary order, reconfigured by the modern turn-of-the-century techne.8

As an inter-oceanic passage and point of articulation between the North and South, the Canal was as much an effect as a condition of possibility for such a worlding. In fact, it was constructed by migrant labour formed by nearly forty thousand workers hailing from Jamaica, Martinique, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Trinidad, Guadalupe, not to mention China, Scandinavia and Galicia: a heterogeneous or discrepant cosmopolitan force (as James Clifford would say) that inhabited and laboured in a profoundly transnational zone of contact. That zone of contact was maintained under the strong-arm control of an elaborate police apparatus that monitored and partitioned the area in accordance with a strictly stratified order of castes. The violence of imperial racism can thus be found at the very base of the modern project of worlding, undermining any other libertarian or dialogical assertion of global(izing) 'contact'.9 Henry Franck, a member of the police force during that time, candidly recalls the racial and
linguistic hierarchies in the small world articulated and compacted by the project of constructing the Canal:

Here are the Basques in their Goinas, preferring their native 'Euscarra' to Spanish; French 'niggers', and English 'niggers', whom it is to the interest of peace and order to keep as far apart as possible; occasionally a few sunburned blond men in a shovel gang, but they prove to be Teutons or Scandinavians; labourers of every colour and degree—except American labourers, more than conspicuous by their absence. For the American Negro is an intractable creature in large numbers ... 10

In the epoch of its construction, the Canal was called the Cut by its engineers. In accordance with its namesake, the Canal inscribed and coordinated the intersection of forces, tensions and articulations in a codifying network of a new world. 'The history of wars for humanity', Peter Sloterdijk writes, 'are seen in a different light when certain wars or kinds of war are placed in relation to the crisis of changes in the larger forms of the world'. 11 In the almost immediate aftermath of the 1898 war, the pronouncements of President William McKinley in 1899 and the drive to construct the canal after the Panama secession in 1904, the military-financial-medical-technological complex elaborated a large-scale programme of shrinking the hemisphere by condensation and compression. Such a programme would permanently disrupt those maps and routes traversed by the circulation of capital: the cartography of transcultural currents, and the very conception and self-representation of America. In its wake, we see both the Utopian ebullience in the multiple celebrations of the canal, 'the new [world] wonder' that would unite the North with the South, the East with the West; and the fear of certain critics who remarked on its expansive power—a power that was intimately linked to the emergence of a new empire. These attitudes were best represented by, on the one hand, Theodore Roosevelt, with his peculiar Pan-Americanist ideal, and, on the other hand, those Latinoamericanistas, Latin-Americanists, committed to keeping watch over the borders of 'Our America'. Hence, the marked contrast between the Utopian mission to shrink the hemisphere at the turn of twentieth century and the reconfiguration of coordinates and maps—the form of the world—at the turn of our own. For now, let it suffice to say that the gradual withdrawal of North American troops from Fort Clayton and the handing over of the Canal to the Panamanian government in 1999 closed the history of an entire epoch, and with it a specific mode of colonial domination.

New problems have since emerged. For example, there is the question of what to do with the abandoned buildings strung across Gailard Avenue and where to relocate all the seemingly useless military surplus. Some of the scrap metal, recycled or perhaps re-semanticized, might travel north, where it could possibly serve to add height and thickness to the Tortilla Wall: a wall designed to contain the migratory flux along the US–Mexico border. At its terminal point in California, one finds tons of recycled scrap metal, re-functionalized remnants of the Gulf War, as if blown there by magic by the terrible wind of the Desert Storm.

The solution proposed in 1994 by Panamanian president Ernesto Pérez Balladares and his administration would have been costly—$50 million at the outset alone. But at least it would initiate a new beginning to a new stage in the life of
a post-Cold War Panamanian society beset with, among other things, the challenge of recovering the now missing 8% (by conservative estimates) of the gross national product. One profound believer in the Pan-Americanist network of power and intervention, minister Gabriel Lewis, proposed a new Universidad Americana, similar to that of Cairo or Beirut. 'We hope to replace North American soldiers with an international army of students and professors,' he said in an interview. 'Where before troops were trained for battle, we hope soon to educate the best Latin American academics and professionals. I can't imagine a better use for these operations.'¹² The military barracks would be reoccupied and converted into student housing; the old club for military officials would be transformed into a comfortable faculty club for the distinguished professorate of a new university complex. Such a complex would easily accommodate more than 2500 students from the North and the South; their future alma mater would be Fort Clayton, where throughout the terrifying decade of the 1970s the North American army trained South and Central American military officers. Yet without entirely abandoning the Utopian resonance this central zone has held since the turn of the century, the university was to be called the Ciudad del Saber [City of Knowledge], a new point of conjuncture in the reconfiguration of inter-American hemispheric space. It would provide a new hinge that would affirm regional unity—but not as an effect of engineering, hygiene or military intervention, as Theodore Roosevelt would have had it at the turn of the last century. Rather, its integrity would be based on what is perhaps a more solid foundation in the long run—academic exchange and the formation of Pan-Americanist subjects in the City of Knowledge.

Of course, the source of funds to finance the new Pan-American university remains unclear, which leads one to doubt the viability of such a project in this period marked by a profound crisis in higher education. In any case, the City of Knowledge situates us at once before the present discussion of the political roles of inter-American intellectual exchange in the context of the changing relations between North and South. Such a discussion seems imperative today, now that the system of domination inaugurated at the turn of the past century, in the emblematic moments of the 1898 war and the invention of the state of Panama in 1904, seems to be drawing to a close.

Globalization of Knowledge and the Present Crisis of Latinoamericanismo

This exergue brings us to the contemporary discussion of the difficult place of knowledges and discourses of regional identity, as well as the dislocation of Latin-Americanist subjects confronted with the impact of gradual denationalization and the globalization of knowledges from or about Latin America at the end of the twentieth century. Inspired by the now classic genealogy of Orientalism proposed by Edward Said, the present discussion of Latin-Americanism reflects on its conditions of production and the possibility of articulating a specific set of discourses.¹³ Such an investigation would begin not only with the rhetorical texture of discourses on Latin American difference but also with their institutional and disciplinary foundations.¹⁴ The present discussion of the crisis of Latin-Americanism marks a moment of self-reflection and self-critique in the history of a discursive and disciplinary field that questions the very territorialized categories and geopolitics that sustain it. As in the case of Said, the
investigation of the Latin-Americanist archive in itself implies the critique of the inescapable relationship between, on the one hand, the discourses and knowledges of difference—including the identification of the Latin American 'other'—and, on the other hand, the insertion of such heterologies into the specific formations of metropolitan power.

The analogy between Orientalism, as Said understands it, and Latin-Americanist discourses has generated many discussions and self-critiques of the field. Yet transplanting Said’s thesis to the field of Latin American studies also obscures the multiplicity of subjects and discursive positions that intersect with the concept of Latinoamericanismo, Latin-Americanism. For example, the critique of Latin-Americanism as a field of knowledge tied to the history of international studies in European or North American universities neglects the also problematic history of vernacular Latinoamericanismo as an interpellative discourse produced by Latin American intellectuals. Perhaps for strategic reasons, Said concerns himself primarily with delimiting his object in the archive of knowledges and discourses that have constructed and placed ‘the Orient’ on the maps of European identity. He concerns himself less with the interwoven network of intersections between the multiplicity of orientalisms produced in cultural institutions and the ‘occidental’ European social imaginary, not to mention in the Arab countries themselves. To put it another way, the history of Nasser and a pan-Arabist cultural nationalism constructs its own archive apart from the European imaginary, as well as tropes and strategies of geopolitical differentiation and identification. In the same way, the present concern with the nature of Latin-Americanist knowledge and power frequently obscures the key distinction between metropolitan formations and those vernacular identificatory discourses that—at least since José Martí and even more importantly, the Spanish-American War—have postulated either various defences of the local, of one’s ‘own’ specificity, or emancipatory programmes of ‘Our America’, at different conjunctures of globalization and the ‘worlding’ of the world. Such are the formations of vernacular Latin-Americanisms, crisscrossed by multiple wills to power and framed by claims to authenticity that seem problematic to us today.

And yet, by making the distinction between a metropolitan Latin-Americanism and the vernacular defences of regional specificity, in no way do I attempt to dissolve the grey areas that relativize the borders separating the ‘metropolitan’ and the ‘vernacular’—borders that are at once porous, well traversed and perforated by continuous migrations and the exile of vernacular intellectuals. Historically, the exile has played a constitutive role in metropolitan Latin-Americanism, contributing (from different angles and diverse political positions) to the invention of Latin America as an object of Latin American studies in the universities of North America. Such grey areas destabilize any facile attempt to essentialize the differences between those knowledges from or about Latin America and continue to problematize the very category of ‘vernacular’ discourse, even as they radically undermine the homogeneity of the metropolitan territories that feel the impact of transnational flows of globalization and contemporary migrations.

Alert and lucid until his final days, Antonio Cornójo Polar was a friend and colleague at Berkeley who faced the present disjunctures of Latin-Americanism in a sustained reflection on the borders and frontiers of the contemporary field.
refer particularly to 'Mestizaje y hibridez. Los riesgos de las metáforas. Apuntes', his final contribution to the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). The paper was read in absentia at the international convention celebrated in Guadalajara in March 1997, just two months prior to Cornejo's death in Lima. What follows is a brief reading of this text that, in more than one sense, concerns the tropes of 'ending'. As the last piece written by a crucial author whose influence was felt in both vernacular and metropolitan expressions of Latin-Americanism, it alerts us to the possibility of 'the unhappy and undignified finale of hispanoamericanismo'.

It is not by chance that the concerns raised in 'Mestizaje e hibridez' connect with the wider historical background of 1898, particularly in the sense that Cornejo's essay can be read as one of the possible closures to a variety of discursive positions that have been posed in the field. In a sense, 'Mestizaje e hibridez' broaches the closure of a concept of Latin American culture and a way of conceiving the tasks of regional knowledge, including the defence of its borders. One may recall that these tasks were laid out precisely a century ago, with the same set of strategies and responses to the shrinkage of hemispheric space brought to a head in the 1898 war and the construction of the Panama Canal. It is in this respect that Cornejo's essay reflects doubly on closures: its autobiographical dimension appears to identify the last scene of writing for the author with the closure of an entire discursive field.

Such an association is not an exaggerated one. In various respects, Cornejo can be considered a humanist intellectual of a philological formation, placed in the tradition of Latin-Americanism, the legacy of the essayists, and the tradition that sustained the work of figures who narrativized the canon and the historical memory of the field that we inhabit today. These figures include Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Alfonso Reyes, and Angel Rama—'public intellectuals', to borrow a phrase, whose activities were not limited to the university, and whose wide field of intervention and political authority presupposed certain ties between culture and the public sphere that are perhaps no longer viable in contemporary neo-liberal societies. Cornejo's own reflection on the end of Latin-Americanism thus assumes and reiterates a history of intellectual and academic labour, yet places it in the context of the present crisis characterized by the liberal-republican state in the orbit of globalization. The mere suggestion of a closure to this legacy is one effect of erosion in those models of cultural integration frequently posed by the humanities and the modern university. At least since Andrés Bello's time, the university has legitimized the production of humanistic knowledge and its pedagogical interventions by defining its function(s) in terms of constructing citizenship in the sphere of interpellations and education in literacy and culture. It would seem that the social formations of our turn of the century, marked by the globalization of perpetually 'developing' societies, no longer require the legitimizing intervention of those narratives that were taught as tools for national integration. Perhaps the cultural models of national integration—or the notion of integration itself—are no longer necessary at all, inasmuch as the state has reneged on its 'social contracts' to represent the common good. At the same time, systems of mass communication and consumption (to follow García Canclini's argument) continue to produce alternative parameters for defining one's citizenship—by both the exclusions it implies and the awareness of new and growing areas of abandonment. As Beatriz Sarlo reminds us, in the field
of cultural institutions (and their successive transformations) tied to the republican state, the very concept of the public intellectual has come under question.18 The study of literature and culture, in turn, runs the risk of becoming the simple profession of experts, frequently based in the United States, who increasingly replace the evanescent figure of the public intellectual and the traditional Latin-Americanist humanist.

'Mestizaje e hibridez' questions the destiny of Latin-Americanism, 'the unhappy and undignified finale of Hispanoamericanismo'. In the process, Cornejo Polar's essay summarizes various key positions in the present debate on the transnational channels or 'canals' of production and the circulation of knowledge from or about Latin America. Written in the shadow of the discourse whose end he explores, Cornejo's text paradoxically reinscribes various tropes of origin, the borders of territoriality and the continual presence of a legacy—all of which, historically speaking, have been central aspects of Latin-Americanist rhetoric. The essay explores the changing frontiers of the field by considering the proper and improper ways in which the field borrows, translates and incorporates concepts from other disciplines, even as it questions the legitimacy of exchanges and contacts between itself and other languages and traditions. Cornejo ends by proposing a defence of the borders: he expresses alarm at the risk to the field's identity or immanence before those forces at the present conjuncture, that threaten the field's constitution, from the 'outside'—forces generated by the contact, commingling and hybridization of discourse itself.

Not coincidentally, in Cornejo's essay, the Althusserian problematic of contact and the porosity of borders is first and foremost posed as a question of linguistic order. According to Cornejo, Latin-Americanism in the present suffers from a condition of diglossia—a profound split that antagonistically separates those studies of Latin America produced in Latin American countries from Latin American studies produced in the United States. Creating a rupture between the interior and the exterior, between the proper and the improper, between the authentic and the inauthentic, diglossia manifests itself first and foremost in the growing prestige of English among Latin-Americanists in the United States, and the supposed crisis of Spanish teaching in North American pedagogy. The passage to English in and of itself would not be a problem, were it not accompanied by the increasing marginalization of vernacular Latin-Americanist knowledges produced in Spanish, in a cultural and ideological circuit entirely distinct and each day more precarious. Moreover, in the context of this linguistic divide Cornejo reiterates the trajectory of an even more profound and dangerous fracture—the division of labour that converts Latin American cultural objects into raw material exported to the United States and Europe, while metropolitan academic institutions produce epistemological models for theoretical elaboration and the consumption of that cultural raw material.

One need not agree with Cornejo to recognize that 'Mestizaje e hibridez: los riesgos de las metáforas' touches the very heart of the contemporary debate on the globalization of Latin American cultures, including the present discussion of the effects of the globalization of knowledge produced about these cultures. Cornejo identifies the crisis of cultural discourses and vernacular institutions in this neo-liberal era, and advises caution before the growing influence, even in Latin America, of metropolitan theoretical paradigms: cultural, postcolonial and subaltern studies. Cornejo's essay thus sets off a chain of associations and
oppositions that can be abbreviated to the antagonism between the local and the
global—between the interior field and the ‘outside’ of culture—and the
contradictions that render problematic the possibility of ‘regional’ knowledge (or
discourse of identity) in an increasingly homogenized world. One may add
that even intellectual production becomes subordinated to the levelling demands
of the market, penetrated by the velocity of transnational travel, and impacted
by the consequent, rapid turnover of ideas. By reiterating the classic question
regarding the specificity and originality of American knowledge, ‘Mestizaje
e hibridez’ projects itself into the very historical and discursive network
of vernacular Latin-Americanism that had motivated Cornejo’s essay from
the beginning, to announce an ending. How does one write at this liminal
point of closure? How does a discourse assume the authority to reflect
precisely on the crisis that calls all mechanisms of validation and authorization
regarding its field into question? From what location and position does one
write?

1898: Origins of Latin-Americanism and the Question of Local Knowledges

Beginning with José Martí’s foundational essay, ‘Nuestra América’, and the
series of texts on Pan-Americanism that prepare and anticipate the writing
of that essay in 1891, vernacular Latin-Americanism has often been invoked
as a defence of the local in diverse instances of globalization and worlding.
Hence our assertion that 1898 and the reconfiguration of the hemispheric
domain at the turn of the last century marks a decisive moment in the history
of Latin-Americanism. Although Martí died in the early months of that
same war (which began in 1895 and not with the sinking of the US ship
Maine in 1898), his Latinoamericanista essays can indeed be read as an early
response to the reconfiguration and displacement of those borders produced
by North American expansion following the Civil War and the colonization
of the West facilitated by the Mexican-American War in 1848. It is no coincidence,
for example, that the points of departure for Martí’s Latin-Americanist
discourse in ‘Nuestra América’, as well as his Versos sencillos, would be
the intense debate over inter-American relations and, specifically, the official
pan-Americanism generated around the Pan-American Congress in Washington
and its culmination in the 1891 International Monetary Conference. Indeed, I
do not believe that the relationship between Martí’s texts on the dangers of
pan-Americanism—the risks of hemispheric compression—and his own compac-
tion of a ‘mestizo America’, ‘our America’, has been sufficiently emphasized.
It should suffice to recall that the speech entitled ‘Madre América’, a direct
antecedent of ‘Nuestra América’, was dedicated as the welcome greeting on
behalf of an exile (Martí) to the South American delegates participating in the
inter-American conferences, some of whom he met during their stay in New
York.

As early as the late 1880s, the North American government, represented by
Secretary of State James G. Blaine, proposed a series of inter-American commercial
and industrial agreements that would spur the construction of railway and
telegraphic networks, along with the relaxation of customhouse and border
controls. These pan-American projects were also motivated by the ideal of a
common currency that would at long last unite the American nations. The new
map was to erase once and for all the obstinate boundaries separating North and South. Such an erasure would make possible the creation of an American power capable of undermining the hegemony of the European powers in the world order.\textsuperscript{22} Yet Martí was unmistakably critical of this vision. In this period he identified the condition of modernity with the internationalization of not only capital but also cultural flows. His telluric Americanism thus set forth an alternative vision of modernity—one guided by the knowledge of the earth. According to Martí, such a knowledge would ‘guide’ and ‘unite’ an alternative hemispheric dominion. Martí’s Latin-Americanism operates as a reversal of hegemonic modernity and its ‘worldings’. It emerges, however, from the same historical conjuncture; it becomes displaced in the same space under compression; and the same networks of modernity—the market, the intensification of transnational contacts, and the inevitable cultural exchanges of a new cosmopolitan order—articulate it. Hence, Latin-Americanism in its turn would give way to the importance of journalism and the chronicle, texts of those traveller-mediators who traversed the new order, often serving as mediators between the metropolitan cultures and the Latin American reader.\textsuperscript{23} It is thus no coincidence that the founders and inheritors of Latin-Americanism begin as travellers and/or exiles: such was the case for Martí, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Rubén Darío, Alfonso Reyes and Gabriela Mistral.

In this new, disputed and unequal space, and in an epoch that historians generally identify with the gradual incorporation of Latin America into the world, the positions of intellectuals became redefined. Their new task was to ascertain the specificity and limits of a field dedicated to their ‘own’, ‘proper’ identity; to propose models for cultural contact and translation; and to determine the possibilities and risks of transcultural exchange in a global, cosmopolitan order. Hence the defence of local knowledges and vernacular cultures in Martí may be considered both a critical response to and an effect of the compression of hemispheric space, produced by the intense re-worlding of the Americas. The seizures of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898, as well as the succeeding invention of the state of Panama and the construction of the Canal, are events that emblematize that re-worlding. The construction of the canal in particular was at once a trope and a real effect of pan-Americanism—a strange and wondrous emblem, sprung from the new articulations between North and South.

Might it not be said, then, that Latin-Americanism—up until and including Cornejo and our turn of the century—is a field of investigation into the precarious balance among cultural formations of international capital and vernacular cultures? Attentive to the varied conjunctures of worlding, the Latin-Americanist subject emerges and institutionalizes his topographic and territorializing imaginary on the frontiers of mediation: separating the zones of contact from the danger zones and deciding the norms for a ‘sanitary’ cultural exchange. ‘The haughty villager believes that the entire world is his village’, Martí once said.\textsuperscript{24} Confronting this perspective, the Latin-Americanist subject deploys two interrelated gestures: first, looking ‘outside’ (‘the tiger from outside’, as Martí would say) and then reflecting on the process of globalization; second, looking ‘within’ (‘the tiger within’) and then reflecting on the internal contradictions that sought to prevent the consolidation of political and civil institutions that would provide the democratic foundation of a virtual American
order. Both positions call for mediation and translation. The authority of the emergent Latin-Americanist subject relies on the translation of foreign models, of course, but also on the translation of those obscured and subaltern voices—the ‘mute masses of indios’, the ‘despised Negro’ and the ‘peasant, creator’. The gesture of incorporating and representing the other authorized and legitimized the aesthetic and intellectual project in the otherwise wide-open field of modern Latin American literature. One might argue that this is still true today. ‘Speak through my words and my blood’, Pablo Neruda writes in ‘The Heights of Macchu Picchu’ [‘Alturas de Macchu Picchu’]. Yet beyond Neruda, Martí or (more recently) Miguel Barnet, the claim to representativeness is one of the foundations of the literary institution and its testimonial vocation: literature endows the other with the ‘gift’ of speech. The Latin-Americanist intellectual thus performs a dual task: she/he mediates between the world and the local on the one hand, and provides the internal translation necessary for the construction of the local on the other. The latter task involves the invention of vernacular tradition, along with its alternative legacies.

Yet this gesture of mediation defines only one ostensible pole of Latin-Americanism. José Enrique Rodó’s Ariel occupies the other. For Rodó, the war of 1898 and the compression of hemispheric space provided the incentive for a new point of departure. In its polemical and immediate insertion into the emergent field of Latin-Americanism, Ariel is a cultural-aesthetic critique of ‘[North-]Americanization’, which Rodó placed in opposition to the alternative of a legacy and archive inspired by the invention of Euro-American Latinism. Of course, Rodó largely avoided the term cosmopolitan; when he did use the word, he used it in a pejorative sense. In Ariel, cosmopolitanism is synonymous with foreign influences and related to a popular and working-class immigration that threatened the very integrity of Latin American ‘high culture’.

Without attempting to minimize the differences, one can nevertheless see how in both Martí and Rodó—whose models are frequently opposed in the historiography of Latin-Americanism—the reflection on the border and the practice of mediation(s) also responds to globalization and the necessity of constructing a Latin American legacy, memory and archive. Of course, the archives and notions of legacy proposed by Martí and Rodó were on the one hand radically distinct. While Rodó and his followers, at war with ‘Americanization’ and modernity, proposed a Euro-Latin-American legacy, Martí founded his identity-narrative on a fiction propelled by subaltern, ‘autochthonous’ or vernacular ‘voices’. Nevertheless, the practices of Latin-Americanist mediation in both cases are based on the varied inflections of a cultural-aesthetic authority that privileges the role of literature in the construction of citizenship, or what Schiller has called ‘the aesthetic education of man’. The intellectual subject in both is called into being and given authority as the one responsible for reflecting on the necessary conditions for a democracy in which cultural-aesthetic representation would satisfy a regulatory principle. Such a role would, for Martí, contribute to the representation of particularity under the stigma of subalternity; for Rodó, it would provide the ‘aesthetic of conduct’ necessary for the self-administration of the soul and the constitution of disciplined subjects.

Indeed, has not the reflection on democracy and the search for regulative principles extended all the way to our present? Would such a reflection not include even the distinctive registers of cultural-aesthetic authority in Beatriz
Sarlo and Nelly Richard, for example—both of whom take up, from different political positions, the defence of literature and the aesthetic? For both writers, the aesthetic retains the capacity to present alternative worlds to the instrumental logic of the market and the neo-liberal middle ground, both of which prefigure precisely in post-dictatorial contexts and democracies in transition. John Beverley has recently gone so far as to refer to these and other reconfigurations of the aesthetic subject in terms of a 'new Arielism'. Without a doubt, one must qualify the almost epic heroism ascribed by Sarlo to artists as defenders of an autonomous and critical space in the postmodern scenario, on the one hand, as well as the (political) radicalization of the aesthetic subject in the anarchist-avant-garde discourse of Nelly Richard, on the other. But there is no doubt that both Sarlo and Richard, who arise from theoretical and writing practices that are quite distinct, assign a certain privilege to aesthetic authority in the ongoing debate on democracy.

Without avoiding the obvious differences, in Martí and Rodó the question of delimiting boundaries of the 'proper' in modernity is inescapably tied not only to North American expansionism but also to the 'internal' problem of democracy. Modernity brought about the emergence of new political agents—women, workers, as well as unforeseen social alliances—that pressured the public sphere and forced a rethinking of the intellectual's place, as well as the place of high culture, in societies on the road to modernization. In this respect, it is not coincidental that for many of the new social subjects identified with the relative aperture produced by modernization, the war of 1898 would not necessarily represent a trauma or disaster. As many of the more radical working-class intellectuals of the epoch thought (particularly in the case of Puerto Rico), North-Americanization would, paradoxically, make possible the democratization of the public sphere and the creation of certain conditions and guarantees for the constitution of an anti-capitalist working-class movement. Such movements would have certainly held suspect many of the aesthetic-cultural discourses that privileged the mediating and representative role of the intellectual in the defence of nationalism and the Latin-Americanist registers that multiplied after 1898. I refer, for example, to Luisa Capetillo and the libertarian discourses tied to the emergence of the Puerto Rican workers' movement lucidly studied and anthologized by Angel Quintero Rivera.

The working-class intellectuals at the beginning of the century, that ever-changing and volatile epoch, also intervened in the debate on globalization, producing local knowledges (albeit quite cosmopolitan in nature) and alternative libraries. Taking into consideration the Uruguayan and Argentine context of a nascent vigorous working-class movement at the time, one sees how in Ariel the proletarian immigrant subject lies at the unspoken and terrifying margins of the cultural-aesthetic subject in formation. Martí, on the other hand, became deeply involved with the most politically radical sectors of tobacco-workers and immigrants—many of them anarchists—who constituted the social and financial base of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) during the period of its establishment. Without a doubt, the grounds of aesthetic authority were profoundly transformed in these arenas. As Martí headed for war (and his death), he cleared new paths for the aestheticization of politics.
As we have seen, 'Mestizaje e hibridez' reinscribes and recalls the tone, the subject-positions and some of the rhetorical strategies of vernacular Latin-Americanism and its defence of local knowledges. It is organized around the binary of the global and the local; and it traverses and retains the borders that distinguish its 'own' territory, advising caution when faced with the borrowings of other disciplines (characteristic of cultural studies and its transdisciplinary passion) and other languages (especially English). But, in contrast with its antecedents, a certain pessimism in this essay leads the author to suggest that the present impact of globalization may well be decisive in drawing the final curtain on Latin-Americanism. This is perhaps because for Cornejo, as for Sarlo, the current crisis felt in cultural institutions (and the republican pedagogical apparatus) tends to cancel both the intellectual's representative role and the privilege granted to the cultural-aesthetic project, as two forms of authority central to the interpellation of subjects as citizens. Hence the organizational and legitimizing bases of vernacular Latin-Americanism—the representation of subaltern voices, the construction of models for translation, and the appropriation of foreign materials for the nation's benefit—have definitively lost their viability. To reiterate, this loss comes by way of the crisis of the liberal notion of representativeness, as well as the difficulties confronted by any and every reification of the local, of the proper, in this epoch of intense globalization.

The globalization of culture is not necessarily new. It may well be considered constitutive of the logic of capital. Yet what has certainly changed is the authority and the institutional basis of those discourses that once (at least until the 1970s and the beginning of the crises of the Latinoamericanista left) vigorously responded to the new worldings. As late as 1971, it was still possible for Roberto Fernández Retamar to believe that the cultural-aesthetic realm, the sphere of arts and literature, could sustain a central, organic role, in a territorial defence of culture in so far as it could generate the necessary mediations for the formation of a national-popular culture.33 In his late classic of Latin-Americanism Calibán, this national-popular culture represented no less than the crystallization of class warfare.

Still, the categorical oppositions of the metropolis and the periphery, the global and the local, the interior and the outside, the authentic and the inauthentic, are radically impacted by the acceleration and intensification of globalization. The phenomenon of continual travel, for example, or the migration of intellectuals and ideas or, more recently, the critical interventions of Chicano, Puerto Rican and Latino critics and students in the field of Latin-Americanism, shake the foundations of territorial representation. These are subjects whose vital experiences and intellectual labour either introduce new tensors or at times cross paths with the old, cutting diagonally across those territorializing notions of roots, linguistic purity, fixed origins or continuous legacies that still manifest themselves today as tropes of vernacular Latin-Americanism. If we believe that Latin-Americanism is after all a complex archive of discourses on territoriality and locality, discourses that attempt to define the specificity of its objects in terms of regional or geopolitical difference, we can today question the efficacy and viability of those modes whose task it once was to draw lines and boundaries over the field of identity. Such a project is particularly imperative in
an epoch wherein the transnational flows of flexible capital have violently thrown open zones of contact and exchange, while the mass migrations of Caribbean, Mexicans and Central Americans have produced enclaves of speech and Spanish culture at the very heart of the key metropoles in the United States. Perhaps it might not be entirely imprudent for us to ask, along with Tato Laviera, if Manhattan is not after all an island in the Antillean archipelago; or if Loaiza is a barrio of the Lower East Side. Perhaps it may not be inappropriate to wonder where Latin America, a locality mapped and protected by discourses of territorial identity, is now.

Neither is it extraneous to recall today, in Washington, DC, that one hundred years after the invasion of Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898, the relative Caribbeanization and Latinization of the very urban area that situates our discussion on North and South rearticulations challenges any facile, monolingual notion of juridical citizenship, as well as any attempt to perpetuate the maps and inflexible territorial categories institutionalized by the discourses of vernacular identity.

Notes

1. For the full text of the 1997 Panama Canal (Carter-Torrijos) Treaty, see website http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/panama/pa_apprb.html.

2. Colin Woodard, 'In a Swap of Sword for Pen, Panama wants US Base to Be Knowledge City', Christian Science Monitor (10 June 1997).


8. On techne as an operation of inscription and the creation of ‘worlds’ as discursive constructs, see M. Heidegger, The Question of Technology; and his critique of the category of the 'conception' or 'vision of the world' in 'Comments on Karl Jaspers's Psychology of World-Views', Pathmarks, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1–38.


12. Cited by Calvin Sims (see note 4 above).
13. See Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). For Said, Orientalism involves a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which ... it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses a certain *will or intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate what is a manifestly different ... world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power" (12, emphasis in original).
19. Arcadio Díaz Quiñones has shown how the crisis of Spanish imperialism that culminated in 1898 was also decisive for the formation of Hispanism and its literary histories. In fact, up to this day Hispanism maintains a certain acceptance in US Hispanic studies, wherein Latin American literature frequently appears as one of many offshoots of a Spanish Castilian and imperial history inaugurated by *El Cid Campesino*. See A. Díaz Quiñones, '1898: Hispanismo y guerra', in 1898: su significado para Centroamérica y el Caribe, ed. Walther L. Bernecker (Berlin: Vervuert Verlag), pp. 17-35.
20. I am referring here to the texts on the International and Monetary Conferences held in Washington, DC (1899), included in the volume *Nuestra América* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1977), pp. 35-132.
22. José Martí (see note 20 above).
23. On the role of the traveller-mediator and the import journeys conducted by them, see Julio Ramos, *Divergent Modernities* (see note 14 above), esp. 'Limits of Autonomy' (ch. 4).
28. On the other hand, one must not reduce the complexities of the aesthetic subject. Rodó himself, for example, maintains a very ambiguous relationship with the aesthetic and the rhetorical 'excesses' of literature, which he opposes at times to the priority of a desired 'manhood' ['energía viril'] for the citizen-subject. See note 26 above, p. 51.
