

Temporality and colonialism: Goa and Latin America

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This article emerged primarily as a response to two essays of Walter Mignolo's that address moments when it seemed possible for Latin American and Indian anti-colonial and subaltern theoretical writing to generate a mutually fruitful dialogue.¹ This dialogue was directed towards the possibility of identifying the terrain on which the epistemological hegemony of Western Europe could be countered. Unlike the essay 'Coloniality of Power and Subalternity' that deals directly with the South Asian trajectories of this question, Mignolo's 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference', has more to do with laying out the political need for working on a critique positioned on the exteriority of western philosophy, capitalism, and the social sciences. For from the fifteenth century on, he asserts, coloniality, (a term suggested by Anibal Quijano, encompassing and stretching beyond the moment of political decolonization) has been the darker side of each of these closed but apparently universal systems.² The task of former colonies that were still, in Quijano's terms, enmeshed in the coloniality of power, if not colonial rule, was to find grounds on which alternate and counter epistemologies could be built. Enrique Dussel's argument for 'Liberating reason' according to him provides one such possibility.³ Mignolo highlights Dussel's difference with Gianni Vattimo's critique of western modernity which suggests 'dispersion as final destiny of being', to ask instead of what use such a philosophical stance could have, to one located on the brutal underside of global capital and colonial modernity.⁴

Dussel's opposition is premised on the hope of grounding a philosophical critique in the local, where the challenge seems to be an understanding of the local that enables an epistemological, historical and geo-political articulation that makes its insertion into structures of power visible. With this in view, the subaltern school of historiography in India proved to be of interest, for its own theorization of subalternity as not only direct subordination, but an epistemological subordination produced by the intersection of indigenous and colonial dominance. This intersection, according to Mignolo, makes visible the inter-state condition of subalternity, and holds promise as a framework by which to continue articulating the post-colonial insertion of peripheries into different forms of capitalism.

This conjunction of interest could not be achieved without some preliminary investigation of the difference in the encounter of each continent with colonialism. To sum up what is already laid out in detail by Mignolo, one of the important ways in which the theorization of colonialism in India and Latin America differs, is over the different temporalities of experiencing colonialism, and explaining its relation to modernity. For Guha, and in general for the South Asian Subaltern Studies group, according to him, there was no choice but to locate the 'beginning' of coloniality in the emergence of British India. For Latin American intellectuals interested in understanding coloniality and coloniality of power embedded in nation building, there was no choice but to

¹ Walter D. Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,' *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 1, Winter (2002), Walter Mignolo, 'Coloniality of Power and Subalternity,' in *The Latin American subaltern studies reader*, ed. Ileana Rodriguez (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

² Anibal Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,' *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000).

³ Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilina Martinez (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1985).

⁴ Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,' p. 65.

locate the 'beginning' of both colonialism and modernity in the emergence of Spanish (and later on Latin) America.⁵

Mignolo states that the dominant historiography of modernity buries Latin American history after the 'second modernity', to focus on the economically ascendant nations of England, Germany, and France. The post-Enlightenment ascendance of France and England was narrated to obfuscate the centrality of empire to early modern European capitalism. From the point of view of recently independent Latin American nations, Mignolo argues, this renewed assertion of modernity could only be a second modernity that effectively erased them from new universalist histories.

This promising beginning that had the potential of a dialogue between two locations of theorization has however, he regrets, been woefully one-sided. It marked a departure from dependency theory, that other moment when a conjunction of political and theoretical interests between the two regions was grounded in the possibility of making Marxist critiques of capitalism speak more directly to the condition of coloniality.⁶ If Latin American dependency theorists were benchmarked in the teaching of economic history in India, the same is not true of Latin American intellectual production in other areas of colonial history. Given the relegation of Latin American thought to specific departments and area studies in India, it would seem as though the cultural and geo-political specificities of Latin America inevitably isolated it to a cultural particular, an ongoing overseas development that was interesting, but not of immediate and applicable relevance. However, the impact or dispersion of the work emerging from the Subaltern Studies perspective itself has scarcely been restricted to or even emerged from local political and cultural contexts in India.⁷ Critiques of the 'phenomenon' of this school have in fact suggested that its pedagogic viability in the US, with a corresponding diminishing of responsiveness between academic production and political activism in India is of concern.⁸ The absence of dialogue with Latin American intellectual production cannot be reduced to this charge alone however, and can more likely be traced firstly to the critique, in India, of some of the universalist and orientalist underpinnings of orthodox Marxist theories, or perhaps, as a primary cause, orthodox Marxist party practices in India, and secondly, to the underlying assumptions about colonial difference that separate the two continents. Perhaps Mignolo gestures towards all of this when he states,

Why Bolivian scholars had enough interest in translating South Asian contributions to Spanish and not vice versa is a question that cannot be explored here. I will say, however, that one of the reasons for a one direction translation ... has to do with the larger picture of coloniality of power; with language, translation, and knowledge in the colonial horizon of modernity; with the force of coloniality of power that permeates even intellectual work and dialogues, almost imperceptibly.⁹

Reading through accounts of the reception of postmodernism in Latin America however, it appears that the grounds for the interest in, or adaptation, skepticism and outright rejection of the field parallel its reception in India.¹⁰ The outright skepticism of Marxists of certain persuasions, of other Marxists who viewed some of its theoretical challenges seriously, and a

⁵ Mignolo, 'Coloniality of Power and Subalternity,' p. 432.

⁶ Sing C; Denmark Chew, Robert Allen, ed., *The underdevelopment of development: essays in honor of Andre Gunder Frank* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996).

⁷ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography,' *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 1 (2000).

⁸ Sumit Sarkar, 'The Decline of the Subaltern,' in *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Walter D. Mignolo, 'Coloniality of Power and Subalternity,' in *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*, ed. Ileana Rodriguez (USA: Duke University Press, 2001), 440.

¹⁰ Fernando Calderón, 'Latin American Identity and Mixed Temporalities; or, How to Be Postmodern and Indian at the Same Time,' *boundary 2, The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America* 20, (Autumn, 1993), no. 3.

host of other intellectual groups and positions who responded to the questions regarding subjectivity and agency seems to mirror the reception in Latin America outlined by John Beverley and José Oviedo in their introduction to the 1993 issue of *Boundary 2*, dealing with the Postmodernism debate in Latin America.¹¹ Beverley and Oviedo also comment on how the periodisation of literary movements in Latin America disallowed a compatible and chronologically similar absorption of postmodernism into literary studies and into the social sciences. In fact, the receptivity or the susceptibility of the social sciences to postmodernism has been attributed to the crisis of the Left in Latin America.¹² Such an overview of intellectual shifts in the Indian subcontinent would probably produce fairly similar points of crisis.

If intellectual currents in both areas continued to diverge however, it suggests that a different shift in intellectual concerns occurred in India after the crisis of legitimacy of the nationalist government and eventually, the political promise of Marxism. While some of the critiques of a Eurocentric modernity and elaborations of alternate chronologies and alternative relations to time and history itself were common to both regions, the disavowal of Marxist analytical categories was perhaps more comprehensive among those particular representatives of Subaltern Studies who are most visible internationally, or who are cited most frequently within the Latin American Subaltern Studies groups. The graduated movement away from excavating the agency of the subaltern to problematising the notion of agency itself has led to a swerve in the focus of study from movements and mobilizations to the nature of historiographical paradigms and concepts themselves. It could even be hazarded that some of these works have, as an extension of this shift, succeeded in the 'construction of postcolonial intelligentsias as "sharecroppers" in metropolitan cultural hegemony', a move that Guha himself is said to have warned against.¹³ To revert to Mignolo's suggestion that the workings of cultural hegemony are often imperceptible, it is possible to suggest that the location of many prominent Indian subalternists and those whose work has drawn from the series, in metropolitan centers such as the US has compelled the necessary distance of academia from political involvement and reduced the necessity of having the most overt sites of oppression in view at all. This has to be seen less as a question of culpability or choice or surrender to the impetus of an international academic market, though this has been suggested explicitly enough in various forums. In fact to contest this, there would be sufficient numbers of examples of individuals or collectives of intellectuals whose alliances and geographical moves display an ability to exploit the relevance and impact of different locations for the purposes of political intervention.¹⁴ Similarly, alongside the problematisation of forms of political mobilization that continue to invest in universalistic conceptions of agency that are tied to a Marxist teleology of capital there have also been many attempts, particularly from the perspectives of gender, feminism and caste, that have seen a form of cultural deepening and diverse intellectual borrowings in work that continues to try to speak to these crisis points. When discussing the issue posed by Latin Americanists, therefore, it may be necessary to restrict this question to a particular trajectory within Subaltern Studies and not Indian academia or Indian historians as a whole, though there may be plenty that could be said about its emerging hegemony.¹⁵ Liberated from the straits and contingencies of those who are in fact inserted in the relentless spread of the logic and time of global capital, some strands in subaltern studies have

¹¹ John Beverley and José Oviedo, 'Introduction,' *Boundary 2*, Published by: Duke University Press Vol. 20, no. 3, The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America, (Autumn, 1993).

¹² Ibid: pp. 5-6.

¹³ Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, 'Founding Statement,' *Boundary 2*, Published by: Duke University Press 20, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 119-20.

¹⁴ Environmental and human rights groups in particular have been able to strategize based on the multiple locations of activists, as have those who have mobilized against radical Hindu organizations between the US and India. See for instance attempts to monitor fund collections for right wing militant organizations such as the RSS in <http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-mathew120805.htm>

¹⁵ Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography.'

resolved the pressures of searching for alternative locations of resistance by allowing the re-entry of revered texts and mythical or historical figures as transcendental cultural signifiers now made respectable by being signposted as resisting the linearity of time and the trap of identity.¹⁶ In contrast, though going only by the self-representations of the Latin American Subalternists, it appears that intellectual production among theorists of colonialism in Latin America continues to be responsive to contemporary political processes and shifts.

If counter-epistemologies 'cannot be reduced to the linear history from Greek to contemporary North Atlantic knowledge production', some strands of work among Indian historians have explored sources from which to theorize ways of being that depart from founding colonial philosophies of being and time.¹⁷ Though Mignolo asserts that '(T)he densities of the colonial experience are the location of emerging epistemologies,...that do not overthrow existing ones but that build on the ground of the silence of history', a few emerging histories among Indian subalternists have veered towards searching for an absolute other to western modernity.¹⁸ This has made for a richer but unquestionably culturally internalist and indigenist excavation of modes of being that are outside history, time and modernity.¹⁹ It is difficult to see how such modes can effectively be summoned to address the immediacies of struggles against oppression by neo-liberal states and global capital, and while this is not the immediate question addressed in such academic work, it has also become a question that is increasingly distanced from the site of intellectual production. In contrast, by and large, Latin American theorists, even when they emphasize indigenous as opposed to Creole worldviews, are less fearful of the contaminations of popular and contemporary politics, and explorations of alternative epistemologies as often as not draw from contemporary articulations of anti-neoliberal movements.²⁰ Once again, this difference is not to suggest the elitism of Indian as opposed to Latin American theorists, but to make a further argument that the trajectory within subaltern studies described above has led to particular engagements with the cultural past that are unlikely to become dominant among Latin Americanists. The reasons why such a trajectory developed can be attributed to an understanding of colonialism that is common to literary studies and history, specifically the underlying dominance of a singular way of understanding colonial difference.

The temporality of decolonization and the patterns of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism have something to do with this. The circulation of colonial elites and anti-colonial positions between the colony and the metropolises in the experience of Iberian colonialism and the production of creoles and mestizos as the leaders of nationalist movements have deterred, to a degree, the investment in cultural authenticity as the premise for the establishment of colonial difference. This is not to say that the opposition between the positions of indigenous populations and Creole elites has not been the focus of much debate, or that indigenous worldviews don't provide conceptual possibilities to counter the dominant and inadequate perspectives of the Creoles, but that cultural indigenism as the singular preserve of authenticity has not been the primary plank to establish colonial difference.²¹ If the impact of South Asian subalternists has been to make visible the neglected sources of pre-colonial indigenous cultural production in Latin America, it does not necessarily follow, within Latin American studies, that the onset of

¹⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Histories and Post-Enlightenment Rationalism,' in *Habitations of Modernity - essays in the wake of Subaltern Studies* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,' 67, Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Histories and Post-Enlightenment Rationalism.' Ashis Nandy, 'History's Forgotten Doubles,' in *The Romance of the State, and the Fate of Dissent in the Tropics*, ed. Ashis Nandy (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁸ Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,' 67.

¹⁹ Guha, *History at the Limit of World History*.

²⁰ See references to Rigoberta Menchú's testimonial in Oviedo, 'Introduction.'

²¹ Nelly Richard, 'Cultural Peripheries: Latin America and Postmodernist De-Centering,' *boundary 2 The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America* 20 (Autumn, 1993), no. 3.

colonialism is viewed as a steady corruption of an ideal state, or that the conceptual worlds of the indigenous Latin Americans became absolutely inaccessible and obfuscated through their transition through western languages. On the contrary, these worldviews are offered as mobilization points from which to posit opposition to current forms of coloniality of power. Likewise, Enrique Dussel's work on Liberation Theology explores the possibilities of a Christian conceptual framework that could be summoned to posit an alternative way of inhabiting organized religion and combating its more oppressive currents and legacies.²²

The reason why this article argues that this constitutes a significant difference is because an unspoken assumption in substantial numbers of studies of colonialism in India is that cultural difference between colonizers and colonized was and is the ground for opposition to epistemological dominance.²³ While work in other fields and other periods do not have the same preoccupation, they are also inflected by this charged question.²⁴ Latin American borrowing from the Subalternists also takes on this assumption, and I would argue that this is an uneven and problematic borrowing, as the difference established by Iberian colonizers produced different responses to colonialism and different forms of resistance. The metropolitan elite/Creole divide, or the Creole/indigenous group divide appears to mirror the British/colonial elite and colonial elite/subaltern split that characterizes not only the subaltern school, but various strands of Indian history that have opposed the unifying narratives of nationalist history. However an unspoken assumption about the divide between the British and the colonial elite is cultural difference that is not foregrounded in Guha's analysis of power and subordination. The difference between these groups in the case of Latin America is rarely premised on distinct cultures. The convergence of a movement for decolonization with its bedrock in cultural assertion for instance, is not borne out in the nationalist discourse of Latin American colonies. Nor does it remain the unspoken and suppressed underbelly of Latin American experience that was awaiting such a theorization. Two qualifications are necessary here. It has been suggested that the applicability of postcolonial theory shaped by the South Asian experience is greater in the Andean region of South America rather than its southern region, for it is in the Andean space that there exist substantial populations who could be said to be outside the creolized power structures of the rest of the continent.²⁵ Secondly, that postcolonial theory as a whole may not have purchase in the region, simply because the notion of a colonial past as a legacy that was still formative and impinging on the contemporary had less significance than the concept of a persisting coloniality of power. In the case of Brazil, such an argument would suggest, the applications of postcolonial theory are even more remote as from the nineteenth century on, Brazil saw itself as the centre of empire, and its relations with Africa for instance, resemble those between an imperial centre and former colony, rather than as two colonies of the same colonizing power.²⁶ Intellectual borrowings by Latin Americanists may well paper over such aspects that appear to be questions of mere historical specificity, for some of the distinctive moves of western epistemological dominance, such as the desire for classification, categorization, and linguistic hierarchisation of colonial cultures were common, after all, to both South Asia and Latin America.

However, it may be worth revisiting the nature of colonial difference at the beginning point of colonialism, along with the moment of insertion of such nations into the historiography of modernity as highlighted by Mignolo. If the historiography of modernity was transformed by the

²² Enrique D Dussel and Eduardo Mendieta, *Beyond philosophy: ethics, history, Marxism, and liberation theology* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

²³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* (USA: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

²⁴ Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On the Construction of colonial power: structure, discourse, hegemony,' in *Contesting Colonial Hegemony*, ed. Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (London: The German Historical Institute, 1994).

²⁵ Conversations with Enrique Rodriguez Larreta

²⁶ *Ibid.*

perspectives of the eighteenth century Northern European enlightenment, what had also been transformed as a complementary move, were ways of understanding diversity and difference. Between the range of sixteenth century world views circulating among Iberian nations, to the secularized classification of binary difference through which one could know and govern in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, lies the difference between Iberian and British colonialism, as well as the distinction between two perspectives on modernity. For sixteenth century Spain and Portugal, difference was largely marked from a centre that was Catholic in its religious identity and Romanist in its political culture. The initial mechanisms to deal with difference were a result of a conflation of the identity of being Catholic with being part of the Portuguese or Spanish empire. While a generalized privileging of populations with writing over those that did not had occurred, the primary stance of colonizers to cope with the fact of cultural diversity was that of assimilation. If becoming Catholic also potentially opened up a route towards citizenship, and if the initial opposition to colonialism emerged from Creole or creolized elites, it meant that the vocabularies of resistance did not need to be premised on asserting a distinct cultural identity, and the colonizer's political vocabularies were immediately at hand to be utilized and challenged in the colony.

From this perspective, one can revisit Mignolo's emphasis on the temporality of nationalist movements and political independence: the nineteenth century for Latin America, and the mid-twentieth for South Asia. By the mid-twentieth century, there was a distancing from the emotional charge of nationalist movements in the case of Latin America, with its own rapid insertion into the geo-politics of global capital. In the case of India, it would seem that the dislodging of the centrality of the nationalist moment is never complete, with post-independent political agenda continually reinvesting in it on a scale that seems to neutralize intellectual challenges of the kind discussed here. The rapid insertion of newly independent Latin American nations into a subordinate position in the world economy, with the proximity of the United States of America spiraling into an economically and politically dominant position, also ensured that intellectual work could not swerve too far from a consideration of the links between colonialism and capital. The status of the US as a former colony, with a Latin American population substantially extending across the borders between both continents from the time of political independence, also did not lend itself to the consolidation of cultural boundaries within national limits, a move that has been pathologically formative for the Indian subcontinent's construction of nationhood.²⁷

When an attempt is made to tell a history of colonialism without exploring these differences, then the focus on a binary, scientized, disciplinary differentiation that characterizes nineteenth century colonial modernity in the case of India, makes the sixteenth century an incidental moment that would eventually lead to the triumph of nineteenth century Anglo-French rationalist modernity as the moment of arrival. The preoccupations of dominant South Asian histories are unlikely to find points of convergence with a body of theory (Latin American) that does not invest as heavily in identifying an unassailable interiority of the culture of the colonized. It is in fact certain critiques of the Subaltern School, posited from the perspective of Dalit studies for instance, that indicate their indifference to delineating this trajectory for the establishment of colonial difference.²⁸

The Latin Americanist focus on the coloniality of modernity or transmodernity not only compels the retelling of the history of philosophy, capitalism and modernity, but, by default, indicates alternative legacies to establishing difference from within the legacies of colonialism. One of

²⁷ See for instance, U Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (USA: Duke University Press, 2000).

²⁸ G. Aloysius, *Nationalism without a Nation in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

these alternative legacies, I would suggest, is a problematization of the historiography of Goa, a former Portuguese colony on the western coast of India, as the terrain on which the difference between the two kinds of colonialism is enacted. And while there may not be any immediate purchase in contemporary politics to such an enquiry (aside from the academic, but not always political trend towards South-South dialogues) future conversations between the two regions could benefit from a close study of the differences thrown up by this particular perspective. For while the historical connections between Goa and Brazil may not be of immediate relevance or interest to inquiries focused on the problems of the present, I suggest that the underlying conceptual premises of any dialogue between India and Latin America is bound to surface as a problem and a question requiring delineation. For while the terminologies and sources of oppression and resistance (such as capital, colonialism, colonial difference, and indigenous mobilization) may be similar and may find an internationalized and standardized vocabulary, these have distinct histories in the way that they structure power in each region.

The spatiality of power in the sixteenth century, as it stretched across the globe, touched Goa, Brazil, Africa, and other points in the world nearly simultaneously. If the subsequent history of Latin America compels into being a narrative that is turned more towards the US and a broader neo-imperial structure, this does not discount the value of examining the initial moments of conquest for what they brought into being epistemologically. Mignolo's article as do many others, thinks from the present crises of economy, of philosophy, and of Latin American history. While thinking from the local is the most fruitful way to combat universalisms, it is possible to argue that those founding moments when the categories of race and caste began to be used with reference to the colonies, took their impetus from multiple locales and not an isolated one. And the eventual semantic and political weight of these terms did not draw their significance from one terrain alone. Each term had different histories in each region, with race in Latin America for example, playing a far more decisive role in identity and nation formation, while the term caste denoted not too much more than somewhat hierarchised discrete groups of either indigenous people or vegetation. In Goa, race shaped anti-colonial politics between creolized elite and the Portuguese, but caste had taken on entirely different dimensions than it had in Brazil. It was a tenuous filter for colonial power in Goa. It had entered into the language of the Church, marking the routes through which Christianity took hold and through which colonial power was effected among Catholics and Hindus. Usually, within histories of India, the Portuguese use of the term caste is assumed to mark a beginning, a European name, like the term Indian, that was an initial and ephemeral attempt to depict the other, but that had no significant purchase in being a formative political category until the arrival of the British.²⁹ The term 'casta' did denote no more than a differentiation of species that could be hierarchised, but that was only one use of it. The explicit disputes between different groups of Goans from the first disruption of revenue arrangements, indicates the existence of prior hierarchised and potentially conflicting relationships between the inhabitants of each village.³⁰ Yet the weight of determining the nature of caste under Portuguese colonialism lay with the colonized, even if the fundamental structures within which it had to be defined had been transformed by the presence of a Catholic early modern colonial power. However, both race and caste, in their spread across different Portuguese colonies retained an inconsistency of definition and application that provided a porosity that cannot be seen under British colonialism.³¹ This porosity continued, though modified by the pan-European valorization of scientific classification as the bedrock of

²⁹ Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

³⁰ Ângela Barreto Xavier, 'Disquiet on the island: Conversion, conflicts and conformity in sixteenth-century Goa,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 44, no. 3 (2007).

³¹ Miguel Vale de Almeida, 'From Miscegenation to Creole Identity: Portuguese Colonialism, Brazil, Cape Verde,' in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, ed. C. Stewart (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007).

modern governance, and the overwhelming legitimacy in the context of Goa, of British governmentality in neighbouring India, which inserted caste and race into modern political structures.³² It is difficult in this varied genealogy which has rarely been explored between colonies, to determine how influences and exchanges of meaning occurred, through which discursive routes, and along what points of contact. For, conversation between Portuguese colonies has been negligible. Following the diminishing of the Portuguese empire, it has been the immediate context of political dominance that has been decisive in shaping both the historiography of Brazil and of Goa. For Goa, once loosened from the category of the nation, there is an extending boundary of possible inquiry into categories whose colonial contexts tend to be explored only from the eighteenth century on.

The generic nature of the terms Indian, black, caste and race that displaced and obscured the historical and ethnic diversity of people, yet function as political and ethnic place-holders has not been however generated an active conversation between those named, to investigate the mutual semantics of these categories. Goa was the terrain on which the uncomfortable juxtaposition of an early modern coloniality and nineteenth century governmentality converged, most visible in the differing articulations of its Hindu and Catholic inhabitants. This territory provides a rare glimpse of the combination of South Asian social structures with a sustained encounter with early modern colonial rule. Goan colonial subjects were not only upper caste Hindus who called on a discourse of binary difference between colonizer and colonized, but also upper caste Catholic subjects who called on the vocabulary of Christianity, as well as the discourse of caste privilege, and added to this the discourse of scientific governance and colonial improvement when in a position to administer Africans. The privileging of discourses of binary cultural difference in Goa, accompanying the idea of scientific administration from the nineteenth century onward, in an uncomfortable fit with the prior experience of colonialism, not only makes Mignolo's argument about the chronologies of modernity visible, but also indicates the difficulties of taking categories produced under different forms of power and applying them with the expectation of their universal relevance and equivalence. This would suggest that the production of subalternity, in itself a slippery category, moving between both particular subject positions, and an epistemological limit produced under a particular form of colonialism, cannot very easily be transported across contexts.

An analysis of the colonial experience of Goa and Brazil could however be a useful point of theoretical sharing between the regions. For, if Latin America is the forcing ground for a critique of the world systems theory, by insisting on the inclusion of coloniality as a beginning point of modernity, this moment also includes Goa. There are two aspects to this inclusion that would make theoretical contact between these areas useful. For one, the beginnings of coloniality that hierarchised colonies in relation to each other also allowed colonial subjects of those that were placed higher in the racial scale to participate in the administration and interpretation of race as a scientific construct, or as an index for governance.³³ This facet of colonial rule that is also typical of Iberian colonialism is effaced expectedly by the dominance of knowledge production in the Iberian metropole, but also by the fact that this has not been seen thus far as a worthwhile point of contact for study. The other aspect of these early centuries of colonization however, is also that they offer a view of philosophical legacies that were resistant to, though modified by enlightenment thought whether as a stance towards developments in the natural sciences, individual free will, the treatment of colonies, or the economy. While these were eventually

³² Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 'Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Inter-identity,' *Luso-Brazilian Review* XXXIX, no. II (2002).

³³ Cristiana Bastos, 'Race, medicine and the late Portuguese empire: the role of Goan colonial physicians,' *Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies* 5, no. 1 (2005).

sidelined by the legitimacy of the Northern European enlightenment, they have not been widely explored for what their implications are as an experience of colonialism.

Opening up this terrain helps redefine the local as a position from which to challenge dominant epistemologies. If the local is a position that is necessary to dismantle the universalist reaches of epistemology and linear time, then inquiring into the time and nature of colonial experience between colonies is one route into doing this. Such a view has been impelled by the discomfort of being on the exteriority of the history of a nation, as Goa often is, usually unthought-of of, with inclusion into its dominant narratives historically impossible. In contrast, the transcontinental circulation of colonized elites reshaped their vision of history by placing them in different colonies in different times. The Goan colonial subject could be a slave owner in Goa, an administrator in Africa, a bank clerk in Brazil, or a cook aboard British ships sailing across the world. This subject was eventually assimilated into a national category that has disallowed the admission of a diffuse mental geography enabled by an earlier form of colonialism. Recovering the experience of living between Latin America, Africa and Goa would help reconstruct the formation of those conceptual categories that are brushed under as the prehistory of modernity.