In Chapter 3, it was noted that nation building in Central Asia and the Caucasus posses a particular problem of citizenship: The inhabitants of Central Asia or the Caucasus, who are so much hated by xenophobic Russians and constitute a larger part of the labor migration today, go mainly to Russia and not to the West (which is possible only for the chosen few) looking for jobs and better life, because in the modern global configuration of power, entering the world economic system as labor force is still impossible. These people can get to Europe or the U.S. through human trafficking or as organ donors, because only for these kinds of activities have the borders become more permeable today if one is an ex-Soviet colonial other. (Chapter 3, section V)

To further explore the relevance of the trickster, it would be useful to revisit the concept of citizenship in a decolonial frame and in Western political culture. In this chapter, we expand on several issues touched upon in the previous one.

When the idea of “citizenship” came into view—and was linked to the materialization and formation of the nation-state in secular northern
Europe—it enforced the formation of communities of birth instead of communities of faith. But, at that time, the imperial and colonial differences were already in place, and both were recast in the new face of Western empires. The figure of the “citizen” presupposed an idea of the “human” that had already been formed during the Renaissance and was one of the constitutive elements of the colonial matrix of power. Henceforth, there was a close link between the concept of Man (standing for human being) and the idea of Humanities as the major branch of higher learning in both European universities and their branches in the colonies (the universities of Mexico and Peru were founded in the 1550s, Harvard in 1636). If Man stood for human being (at the expense of women, non-Christians, people of color, and homosexuals), the Humanities as high branch of learning was modeled on the concept and assumptions of the humanity that, in turn, was modeled on the example of man. Our goal in this chapter, therefore, is to explore the hidden connections between the imaginary of citizenship, the coloniality of being, and the coloniality of knowledge. Control of knowledge (the coloniality of knowledge) was absolutely necessary to build an imaginary where citizens were defined and noncitizens were cast as the difference (coloniality of being). We describe the veiled connections as the logic of coloniality, and the surface that covers it, we describe as the rhetoric of modernity. The rhetoric of modernity is that of salvation, whereas the logic of coloniality is the logic of imperial oppression. The unfinished project of modernity carries over its shoulders the unfinished project of coloniality. We conclude by suggesting the need to decolonize “knowledge” and “being,” advocating that the (decolonial) “humanities” has a fundamental role to play in this process. Truly, “global citizenship” implies overcoming the imperial and colonial differences that have mapped and continue to map global racism and global patriarchy. Changing the law and public policies is not of much help in this process. What is needed is that those who change the law and public policy change themselves.

The problem is how such changes may take place if we would like to avoid the missionary zeal for conversion; the liberal and neoliberal belief in the triumphal march of Western civilization and market democracy; and the moral imperatives and forced behavior imposed by socialism. As we do not believe in a new abstract universal that will be good for the entire world, the question is how people can change their belief that the world today is like it is said to be and that only through the “honest” projects of Christians, liberals, and Marxists/Socialists could it be better for all, and citizenship will be a blessing for all.
The changes we are thinking about are radical transformations in the naturalized assumptions of the world order. The naturalized assumptions in question are imperial/colonial (not universal), and they have shaped the world in which we live over the past five hundred years, when Christianity and capitalism came together and created the conditions for the self-fashioned narrative of “modernity.” Hence, the transformations we are thinking about require an epistemic decolonial shift. Not a “new,” a “post,” or a “neo,” which are all changes within the same modern colonial epistemology, but a “decolonial” (and not either a “deconstruction”), which means a delinking from the rules of the game (said many times) (e.g., the decolonization of the mind, in Ngugi Wa Th’iongo’s vocabulary) in which deconstruction itself and all the “posts-” for sure are caught. Delinking does not mean being “outside” of either modernity or the Christian, liberal, capitalist, and Marxist hegemony but to disengage from the naturalized assumptions that make of these four macro-narratives “une pensée unique,” to use Ignacio Ramonet’s expression. The decolonial shift begins by unveiling the imperial presuppositions that maintain a universal idea of humanity and human being that serves as a model and point of arrival and by constantly underscoring the fact that oppressed and racialized subjects do not care and are not fighting for “human rights” (based on an imperial idea of humanity) but to regain the “human dignity” (based on a decolonial idea of humanity) that has and continues to be taken away from them by the imperial rhetoric of modernity (e.g., White, Eurocentered, heterosexual, and Christian/secular). The conditions for citizenship are still tied down to a racialized hierarchy of human beings that depends on universal categories of thought created and enacted from the identitarian perspectives of European Christianity and by White men. In the Afro-Caribbean intellectual tradition, the very concepts of the human and humanity are constantly under fire. Would indeed a Black person agree with the idea that what “we” all have in common is our “humanity” and that we are “all equal” in being “different”? I would suspect for one would suspect that the formula would rather be of the type advanced by the Zapatistas: “[B]ecause we are all equal we have the right to be different.” The universal idea of humanity is not the same from the perspective of Black history, Indian memories, or the memories of the population of Central Asia.

The humanities, as a branch of knowledge in the history of the university since the European Renaissance have always been complicitous with imperial/colonial designs celebrating a universal idea of the human model (see Chapter 7). The moment has arrived to engage (and to further the process of learning to unlearn in order to relearn) the humanities in decolonial
projects in their ethical, political, and epistemic dimensions. To recast the re-inscription of human dignity as a decolonial project in the hands of the damnés rather than given to them through managerial designs of NGOs and Human Rights Watch, which seldom if ever are led by actors whose human dignity is at stake. Decolonial projects imply downsizing human rights to its real dimension: an ethical imperative internal to imperial abuses but not really a project that empowers racialized subjects and helps them to regain the human dignity that racism and imperial projects (from the right, the left, and the center) took away from them.

II. The Myth of Global Citizenship

Those of you who have the tendency to trace History to its initial moment and the origin of Humans on earth would find that people have always moved across lands and seas and across continents. However, people moving around the globe before the sixteenth century did not have a “global view” of the globe as we have today, thanks to the world map drawn by Gerar dus Mercator and Abraham Ortelius.76 Furthermore, there are no traces in the long and hazy past of wandering human beings (and wandering living organisms) in which they had to show passports at the frontiers or that there were clear, delineated frontiers. Frontiers that demand passports do not have the same long history of getting lost in the hazy times of the human species. Citizens, foreigners, and passports are part of a short history of the same package that constructed an imperial idea of the “human” and traced the frontiers with “the less humans” and the “nonhumans.” The paradigm of the “human” defined by Christian men of letters during the Renaissance became the paradigm of the “citizen” defined by secular philosophers during the European Enlightenment. “Citizens” is the frame that allowed for the definition of the “foreigner,” which was the translation, in secular terms, of Christianity’s “Pagans” and “Gentiles.” Members of the community of faith did not need passports or the administrative identity that was required of citizens (name, birthday, town of residence, and—as technology and urbanization developed—street name and number, driver’s license, and telephone number).

If one is stubborn and persists in finding antecedents of citizens as social entities or citizen as a concept, and in that task the origin of humanity proves to be a difficult point of reference, one could take a shortcut back to Roman history and the idea of civitas and most likely develop from there an argument showing how the idea of the city and its dwellers, the citizens, evolved.
And, most likely, a large percentage of historians looking at the history of humanity from that “universal” point of origin would jump from Roman *civitas* and the birth of citizenship to the post–French Revolution and find that the citizens are fully grown up and ready to go. The Kantian cosmopolitan citizen was ready to march all over the world—starting from France, England, and Germany (Kant’s paradigmatic example of *civitas*, reason, and sensibility) and move at his will (because the idea of the citizen was modeled first at the image of Man), through the globe.77

But, let us try another route, neither that of the hazy past of humanity nor that of the partial and provincial Roman origins. Miguel León-Portilla, a well-known scholar of Anahuac (Eurocentered scholarship refers to pre-Columbian Mexico instead of Anahuac) and the transformations of Aztec civilization during the Spanish colonial period, explored the meaning of the word “*Toltecáyotl*” and defined it as the consciousness of a cultural heritage.78 He pointed out that, in ancient Náhuatl (the equivalent of ancient Greece), the word “*tlapializtli*” means “the action of preserving something” (León-Portilla 2003: 17). It is not something in general that is being preserved but “what belongs to us” (León-Portilla 2003: 17). “*Tlapialitztli*” is connected in Nahuatl vocabulary with “*yuhatiliztli*,” which, according to León-Portilla, literally means “the action that drives us to live in a given way” (2003: 18). This is, understandably, the basic knowledge human beings have for building communities. Hegel then Heidegger, for instance, used the term “dwelling” to name a similar kind of experience. We can say now that “dwelling” means a certain way of living in the experience of European history, whereas “*yuhatiliztli*” means a certain way of living in the experience of the communities of Anahuac.79 More recently, Afro-Caribbean intellectuals have brought to light the sense of dwelling for African communities that descend from the experience of the massive slave trade by imperial Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An equivalent to Hegel’s and Heidegger’s dwelling is, at the same time, just the opposite in the hierarchy of the human in the modern colonial world. Thus, what is universal is the human drive to build communities grounded on memories and experiences that constitute the house, the dwelling place of different people and not the way that that experience was defined on the bases of European imperial histories and memories (by which I mean, since the Renaissance, because before then the very idea of “European history” is problematic).

Back to León-Portilla. A third concept is *toltecáyotl* or *toltequidad* (equivalent to *anglicidad* or *hispanidad*; i.e., the word that names the identity of a given community, that defines a sense of belonging and a logic of exclusion). Now, *toltécatl* has been derived from the word “Tollan,” a word describing the
place where the Toltecas (a community from whence the Aztecs emerged) lived; “tollan,” in Nahuatl, could be translated as “city” in the Latin tradition. Thus, “toltécatl” came to refer to a certain type of dwellers in Tollan that, in translation again, would be the people of wisdom, artists, and intellectuals in modern terminology—briefly, the elite of Tollan. Consequently, “toltécayotl” was the expression describing a certain style of life of all those who lived in a Tollan, i.e., in a city. León-Portilla makes the educated guess that “toltécayotl” describes a certain set of habits that, in the West, were described as civilization. Now, if “Tollan” is equivalent to city and “toltécayotl” to civilization, then all the inhabitants of a Tollan who follow the rules of toltécayotl are citizens (from civitas, in the West, from which “citizens” and “civilization” were derived). But alas, for Christians, Tollan was a place inhabited by barbarians and pagans; and when the very idea of citizen emerged in the West (in the eighteenth century), the memories of Tollan had already been significantly (if not totally) erased from Mexican indigenous memory. And, of course, there was no particular interest, on the part of Western scholars, to investigate a history that could jeopardize their own roles and disciplinary ground. It is not by chance that a Mexican scholar, León-Portilla, revamped a history buried under the noise of five centuries of imperial/colonial “histories”: that is, not a history of Europe grounded in Greece, but histories Europeans wrote about a past that did not belong to them; a past to which they did not belong; a past that did not belong to the knowledge, memories, and being of the historian telling the story.

The logical conclusion is that looking for the ontology of Western and post-Enlightenment concept of the citizen will not do. It would be more advantageous to look for the conditions that, today, make the idea of global citizenship a myth and an illusion, an illusion of the modern or postmodern idea of globalization that even a Marxist like Masao Miyoshi described with certain enthusiasm in the early 1990s as a borderless world. Global citizenship for almost seven billion people, after five hundred years of modern/colonial world order, may be a little too much for a world controlled by perhaps 20 percent of the global population. The need to learn to unlearn becomes crucial in bringing the myth of global citizenship to common sense and learning to relearn a necessary decolonial vision of global futures.

To start with, today, global citizens have to cross colonial and imperial differences; and those two frontiers, apparently invisible and most of the time unconscious, are very much ingrained (like a blue chip) in the brain of gatekeepers in the frontiers of southern and eastern Europe, in the consulate and embassies of western European countries and the U.S. around the world, and in the U.S. South, as well as in the so-called civil society. If you
have a Brazilian passport in Japan and you are not an employee of the Brazilian Embassy in that country or a CEO of a Brazilian branch of transnational corporations, your citizenship status is far from flexible. It would be closer to Black citizenship in the South of the U.S. before the Civil Rights movement. All is relative, as the dictum goes, and global citizenship applies to only a very small percentage of the world population, those belonging to the political and economic elite and those of us working and consuming for the ruling elite. The rest, the civil and political society in France and Germany as in Bolivia or Tanzania, Russia, or Uzbekistan, are subjected to the rules of the imperial and colonial differences.

Before describing the noninstitutional frontiers created by the imperial and colonial differences, let us make a disclaimer. We are not assuming that global citizenship shall be defined by the desire of the entire population of the world to be citizens of the European Union or the U.S. And it is not the case that the western European U.S. institutions are knocking the doors of 180+ countries to move over there. Beyond that double directionality, global migrations (to which the very idea of global and flexible citizenship is wedded) are going on everywhere. One could argue that not all migrations in the world move to Western Europe and the U.S. from the rest of the world. There are also migrations between the rest of the world. That is right. But there is no massive migration from Western Europe and the U.S. to the rest of the world and, above all, only in the U.S. and Western Europe that the issue of global citizenship was created as an issue. However, whatever particular case you look at, you see that the rules of the colonial and imperial differences are at work. What is important for our argument is the directionality of migrations for which the very idea of citizenship is today at stake. It is obvious that there are more Nigerians, Bolivians, Indians, Ukrainians, or Caribbeans who want to migrate to Europe or the U.S. than people in the U.S. desiring to migrate to any of those places. We do not know of any stories of Anglo-Americans dying in the Arizona desert when marching to cross the Mexican border.80

Similar examples could be found outside the U.S. and Europe. For example, more Bolivians are crossing borders and migrating to Argentina and Chile than Chileans are immigrating in mass to Bolivia. Argentines and Chileans who move to Bolivia are not people but capital. And, as we know, global capital is much more flexible than global citizenship. The directionality is parallel to the U.S. and Latin America or Europe and North Africa: People move from the south to the north and capital moves from the north to the south. In the case of Chile and Argentina, the geographical parameters do not apply, because capital moves to the north and people to the south—the racialization of the Bolivian population and colonial difference are equally at
work. It is estimated that, in Iraq, more than four thousand Americans and more than one hundred thousand Iraqis died in an invasion that was justified for the good of Humanity.81

Well, you may say, that is natural: People move to find better living conditions and, right now, better living conditions are in the U.S. and Argentina and not in Nigeria or Bolivia. And better living conditions in this polycentric and capitalist world we are living in mean more money. And, you can argue that democratic states go to war to eliminate the Evil from the surface of the earth. Fair enough. However, better living conditions are also a myth and an illusion for immigrants from a lesser country in the global distribution of wealth that largely would have difficulties enjoying the privileges of the nationals of the better country. We would ask, then, what are the relationships among capitalism (in its current, global form), citizenship, and racism? Why does capital move freely while people do not? We say people and not citizen because not every person is a citizen—and that space (the space between the person and the citizen) is divided by racism, on which the colonial and imperial differences have been built in the social and political imaginary of the modern colonial world. You are not stopped at the gates (of frontiers or embassies) because you are poor but because of your religion, your language, your nationality, your skin, whatever is taken as indicator of the colonial and imperial differences. Being poor and white is not the same as being poor and of color. In a country like Bolivia, the connection between race and poverty is more evident than in the U.S. where, today, poverty is reaching a vast sector of the White population. Racism is the condition under which the agents of the state and of capital decide who shall be poor, because in the capitalistic economic system, poverty cannot be avoided: It is ingrained in the very structure of the system.

III. Racism, the Colonial Matrix of Power, and Colonial/Imperial Differences

We return to colonial and imperial differences, two complementary concepts introduced in Chapters 3 and 4. Before the citizen emerged in the imaginary of the modern/colonial world, there were the heathens, the pagans, the gentiles, and the barbarians. Who defined them, and how were these social roles described? Where was the standard, the model on which these categories were defined? To put forward the question in the way we did already presupposes accepting Christian theology as the epistemic standard to classify the world. If we look at the world from the conceptual eyes of Islamic
theology or Arabic philosophy or from Aymara pacha-sophy (as an Aymara equivalent to Greek philosophy has been described), we reach at least two different conclusions.

The categories of pagans, gentiles, heathens, and barbarians are not found in Islamic, Arabic, or Aymara thought. We are not saying that there were no categories by which the intellectual elites and officers of the “states” and the population, in any of these language communities and religions, made a distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders.” The question is whether they made it with the virulence we find in many theologians of the Spanish Inquisition as well as progressive intellectuals of the time such as Bartolomé—de Las Casas so fearful of the enemies of Christianity—and with the virulence that was reproduced through the history of the modern colonial world, going through France, England, Germany, and the U.S. A commonly held belief cutting across the most extremely conservative and the most extremely progressive theologians was that heathen, barbarians, pagan, gentiles, and so on all had some kind of deal with the devil (sound familiar?). After the Enlightenment and secularization, the role of the devil receded and lack of civilization took its place.

When theology was displaced by secular philosophy and the monarchic states in complicity with the church were replaced by the secular nation-state, the logic of exclusions that Christians applied to Jews, Moors, Indians, and Blacks was rearticulated. How? Sixteenth-century reclassification of languages and religions in the planet operated mainly in three frontiers. One, the most immediate, was the frontier between the religions of the books that were reestablished when Moors and Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. The second, in chronological order, was the new question of the limits of humanity. To what extent could the Indians be considered human beings? The question was not asked about African slaves, implying that there was no question that they were not quite human. Secularization, in the eighteenth century, replaced the “friends of the devil” with the “foreigners.” Foreigners were not necessarily enemies of the nation. They were just not born (i.e., they were not nationals) in a given language, territory, culture, and blood. The foreigners were not citizens, because they were not under the administration of the secular state, that is, a state no longer controlled by the church and the monarch, but by a state that protected the people against the monarch and the church—a state of the people, for the people, by the people. It was then that the “citizen” was born, ambiguously cast in between the state and the nation in such a way that all modern states were assumed to be mononationals. By this, I mean that those who were not born in a language, a blood, a culture were not considered members of the state—an adminis-
trative unit without blood, language, or memory but, instead, with a flag, a
national anthem, and an army.

Immanuel Kant is a good case study for our argument. In the histori-
cal context of Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, when imperial
powers were changing hands from the Christian and Catholic south to the
secular and Protestant north, Kant was at the crossroads of several debates
and new developments. One of them was to rethink universal history with
a cosmopolitan intent. Why rethink?—because universal history, which was
the property of Christian theologians, needed now to be rethought in secular
terms and in relation to the state.

As any frequent reader of Kant will remember, when thinking about the
ideal society and the ideal history, he replaced God with nature. Theologians
used to talk—like charlatans on television and best-selling authors claim-
ing that they know how to save the believers—of God’s will. They knew
what God planned, what God wants for you, and what God knows is good
for you. Thus, God was and still is a floating signifier you can appropriate
and fill to your taste in private life or in the public sphere. The same thing
happened with Kant and nature. Kant knew what nature’s designs were for
a peaceful society and cosmopolitan peace. Kant’s political thought main-
tains a pyramidal order of society, from the top down, following the Western
tradition in political theory. He places, then, between nature’s design and
the human nation-states, the civil constitution. The civil constitution plays
the role of the master, because all human beings need a master, whereas no
human being could be master of other human beings (Locke had already
developed the same idea). The civil constitution as the supreme document
of state management is the document through which citizens are managed.
A sort of law-politics, to play with words. law-politics, parallel to bio-polit-
ics, manages the “right” and the “legality” of the citizens; not their bodies,
but their mind. From the recasting of the idea of civility and citizen, civil-
zation also became the global secular design that took the place of Chris-
tianization. Thus, Kant’s cosmopolitan order and the universal history he
needed to rewrite was the necessary knowledge to back up the state as well
as state imperial designs in “propagating” the ideals of civilization all over
the globe.

Willingly or not, Kant wrote about anthropology and aesthetics in a way
that revealed the underpinning of his abstract universals in philosophy and
political theory. Let me quote a couple of examples then elaborate on them.
The first comes from anthropology, from a pragmatic point of view:

The Spaniard who evolved from the mixture of European blood with Ara-
bian (Moorish) blood, displays in his public and private behavior a certain solemnity; and even the peasant expresses a consciousness of his own dignity toward his master, to whom he is lawfully obedient.

The Spaniard’s bad side is that he does learn from foreigners [who are the foreigners from whom Spaniard have to learn? Are German learning from foreigners]; that he does not travel in order to get acquainted with other nations; that is he is centuries behind in the sciences. He resists any reform; he is proud of not having to work; he is of a romantic quality of spirit, as the bullfight shows. (Kant [1798] 1996: 231)

Remember that Kant is here describing national characters. And this is what he had to say about the Germans: “The Germans are renowned for their good character; they have the reputation of honesty and domesticity; both are qualities which are not suited to splendor.” However, not all is lost in that domesticity, for “Of all civilized people,” Kant continues, “the German subjects himself most easily and permanently to the government under which he lives” ([1798] 1996: 233). And here is an interesting complement to the previous characterization:

If he arrives in foreign lands as a colonist, he will soon form with his compatriots a sort of social club which, as a result of unity of language and, partially, of religion makes him part of a little clan, which under the higher authority of the government distinguishes itself in a peaceful and moral way through industry, cleanliness, and thrift from the settlements of other nationalities ([1798] 996: 233).

So much for Kant’s cosmopolitanism—apparently derived from how Germans feel at home and bond among themselves in foreign land when they go as colonists. Kant’s national characters, as he himself explains, are based on blood although he will slide color in without justification. First, let us take a look at how Kant connects blood with nature. When Kant gets out of Europe, he encounters the Russian, the Polish, and the European Turks. Let’s listen to what he has to say (stand with me for a little bit longer and you will see how global citizenship and the humanities walk parallel to each other and meet in the same corner) about Russian, Polish and Turks: “Since Russia has not yet developed definite characteristics from its natural potential; since Poland has no longer any characteristics; and since the nationals of European Turkey never have had a character, nor will ever attain what is necessary for a definite national character, the description of the nations’ characters may properly be passed over here” ([1798] 1996: 235).
In section four of *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant takes on the Arabs, Chinese, Indians, Africans, and American Indians. But, I do not go into details here. What I am interested in underlining is that, once you get out of Europe, you get into the downhill road of the human scale. What is interesting, however, is that Kant is describing national characters as innate, as natural characters who, so to speak, lie in the composition of the person’s blood. And he further adds that, “since we are not talking about the artificially acquired (or affected) characteristics of nations, we must be very cautious in sketching them” ([1798] 1996: 235).

Now, it so happened that nature provides the global designs for the state and the Constitution and the innate national character of the human race. Therefore, because nature provides “natural” designs, it would be very difficult to contest Kant as interpreter of nature’s will. What we have here is a sort of secular fundamentalism that brings together the figure of the citizens of both law and blood. For that reason, the nation-state cannot be but a monoracial state and the citizen a composite of an administrative and racially constituted entity.

We have chosen Kant as an example for two reasons. One is that Kant offers the chronological link between sixteenth-century Spanish theologians and their first classification of the world population in racial terms and the twentieth-century updating and transformation of his national characters at a global scale. There is not much difference between what Las Casas thought of the Moors and what Kant thinks of the Arabs. For, beyond the particular descriptions of national characters worldwide, Kant has a scheme in mind that I described elsewhere as the Kantian ethno-racial tetragon. In a nutshell, for Kant, yellow people were in Asia, black in Africa, red in America (he was thinking of the Indians and not of the population of European descent in America), and white in Europe. The ethno-racial scheme, during the Nixon administration, presupposed the Kantian tetragon. It added Hispanics to form what David Hollinger named the “ethno-racial pentagon” (Hollinger 1995). Behind this scheme, we can also recognize—second reason—Kant’s transformation of the colonial and imperial differences as racial configurations put in place by Christian theologians and secular philosophers from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Thus, truly global citizenship presupposes overcoming the colonial and imperial differences, which means that Chicanos/as in the U.S., Aymaras in Bolivia and around the world, and Russians in Europe have the epistemic power to intervene and question the naturalization of an order based on global racism.

Colonial and imperial differences are ingrained in dominant imperial descriptions and justifications of their control over the population in the
colonies as well as in imperial superiority over other empires or imperial histories (e.g., Christian and capitalist empires confronted with the non-Christian and noncapitalist empires, such as the Ottoman Sultanate and the Russian and Soviet Empires). For the colonial difference, Indians and Africans offered Spanish theologians the opportunity to remap the configuration of the chain of human being; and Blacks ended up at the lower level of the scale. That is to say, if Indians were suspicious of not fulfilling the requirements established for *humanitas*; Blacks were out of the question simply because they were not considered human. That is the only way to understand why they became a commodity in the global market, and they were the first dramatic example of how the dispensability of human life in the formation of capitalism goes hand in hand with the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuits. For the same theologians who were disputing the humanity of the Indians and assuming the lack of humanity of the African slaves, Jews, Moors, Ottomans, and Russians were not at the same level. They were not disputed because of their humanity but because of their lack of Latin and Latin alphabetic writing (Las Casas named it “the lack of literal locution”; [1552] 1967: 637) and in their wrong religion. Or, in the case of Christian Orthodox in Russia, they were seen as deviating from true Christianity. Asia was less relevant for Christian theologians.

The Ottoman Sultanate was the closest case in the sixteenth century in relation to which the emerging Christian empires (the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nations and the Castilian Empire) could measure a period of differences. China was a second case in point. The first Jesuits arrived in Japan and China in 1582. But, certainly, Asia was relevant to Kant, because the Dutch and the British, from the second half of the seventeenth century on, have made their entry into the Asian continent. And, at this point, the colonial difference articulated in the Americas (Indians and Blacks) began to be restructured and reinterpreted. France, during the first half of the nineteenth century, made its way to North Africa when the clout of the Islamic Caliphate and Ottoman Sultanate was vanishing. Thus, the colonial difference was rearticulated here, too. And, when that happened, when Asia and North Africa (and the Middle East, since the beginning of the twentieth century) were brought into the sphere of colonial and imperial differences, Orientalism was born. Kant’s characterization of the Arabs, the Chinese, and the Indians were part of the transformation of the colonial difference from the foundation of Occidentalism (the Spanish *Indias Occidentales*), to the French and British construction of Orientalism.

Why are we telling you this story? To argue that global citizenship is being vetoed by the colonial and imperial differences and not by gatekeep-
ers working for the U.S. and European embassies or patrolling the borders. Central Asia and the Caucasus are not alien to this nation-building and citizenship (and the emergence of tricksters), all this is articulated through imperial difference and the second-class status of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and their colonies. What we are saying is that these dividing lines (the imperial and colonial difference, based on the racial classification of people on the planet) are still alive and well and preventing the concretization of global citizenship. In other words, global citizenship is part of the rhetoric of modernity (salvation, development, progress, well-being for all, and democracy), whereas the imperial and colonial differences are the invisible divides that maintain the logic of coloniality (oppression, domination, exploitation, and marginalization). Gatekeepers are the tools of a historically formed belief that has been naturalized and transmitted from generation to generation of schools, colleges, universities, state institutions, tourism agencies, and the like. For this reason, you cannot change subjectivities and the principle of knowledge by means of public policies that maintain the existing subjectivities and principle of knowledge. Reforms are better than nothing, but the result is making more palatable the chronicle of an announced dead. It may improve but not change the situation. If changes cannot come from new laws and public policies, they should come from changes in people’s minds, in their understanding of the historical roots that have formed their sensibilities and beliefs. And, to that end, the decoloniality of being and knowledge is of the essence.

It is our contention that global citizenship today is being challenged by the underground history of racism that impinges on the subjectivity of the population of white countries as well as policy makers and their preferential attitude toward who gets in and who does not. It is true that the needs of the market produce the effect that technologically trained people from the Third World or non-Western imperial countries are less dark to the eyes of employers and passport control. The control over the global circulation of people, particularly from the European Union and the U.S. administration (although the example of the “terrorist’s menace” is spreading to other countries) is enacted not only in the borders but also in the countries of origin. Consulates and embassies act like frontiers over there, as the first scanner. The racial structure with which the imperial and colonial differences have been historically founded (i.e., the foundation of the colonial matrix of power) is the major impediment today to thinking seriously of global citizenship. Once again, decoloniality of being means to regain the dignity that humanitas took away from other humans casted as anthropos. Citizenship can be global only once the colonial and imperial differences are erased and with it the supe-
priority of humanitas over the anthropos. To achieve this goal it is necessary to delink from the imperial hegemony of the humanitas and, therefore, from the hegemony of modern/colonial racial classifications. But, to reach this point, we need the decolonial epistemic shift—not a “new turn” (linguistic, pragmatic, or what have you) within the epistemic perspective that does not admit other epistemic perspective; not a new post (modern or colonial) that recasts the old within a new vocabulary, but a decolonial delinking from the hegemony of Western thought from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to the postmodern and the postcolonial.

IV. The Role of the Humanities and the Decolonial Option

How can we bring the Humanities into the previous historical scheme and toward encountering the decolonial option? Well, let us go back to Kant, this time to his *The Contest of the Faculty* ([1798] 1955). Three aspects are relevant to my argument. The first is that *The Contest* introduced an internal shift in the history of modern Europe since the Renaissance, replacing theology with secular philosophy. He assigned to theology a very important role, next to medicine and law. The three primary disciplines had the responsibilities of ensuring the well-being of society: theology to take care of the soul, medicine of the body, and law of the society. The second aspect is the role Kant gave to philosophy: On the one hand, philosophy was itself one among many secondary disciplines; on the other hand, he assigned to philosophy the role of policing the practice of the three primary disciplines (very similar to the role Jacques Derrida gave to grammatology). And the third aspect introduced in *The Contest* is the reorganization of knowledge. In this regard, philosophy fulfilled the function that theology had in the Renaissance university (Kant [1798] 1955). Kant is with good reason one of the masterminds of what has been called the Kantian-Humboldtian University (Readings 1996), a new university and a new curricular organization at the service of the state and no longer at the service of the monarch or the church.

Basically, the Kantian-Humboldtian University, which is contextualized in the next chapter, was a university in which the crucial role the humanities played in the Renaissance became secular but equally important. It was a mutation from theological to secular humanities. In both cases, the university was no longer a European business but an imperial/colonial one as well: The imperial expansion since the Renaissance and the formation of colonies had in higher education a major way to control knowledge and subjectiv-
ity. The humanities and science (Copernicus, Galileo, etc.) shared the same house of knowledge in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries and were cast under a curriculum composed by the trivium and the cuadrivium. After the Enlightenment, in the reorganization of the curriculum—which had in Kant’s work an exemplar articulation—science and the humanities began to take separate routes. At the end of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Dilthey distinguished between ideographic and nomotetic sciences, between understanding and explanation, between the natural and the human sciences (les sciences humaines, in French vocabulary) or the sciences of the spirit, as Dilthey would have it (1991). After World War II, three important changes were introduced in the tradition of the Kantian-Humboldtian University. First, the social sciences gained ground in complicity with the transformation of capitalism. Corporations began to intervene in the transformation of the university, particularly in the last twenty years, in various forms known to us. Second, the division between the social sciences and the humanities (which in Europe were lumped together as human sciences) gained ground, and the three hard social sciences (political science, sociology, and economics) came to dominate the scene. The humanities receded to a secondary role: Philosophy, no longer the queen of the human sciences, is now an exotic practice among the humanities that is struggling for survival in Europe (western and eastern) and has been reduced to analytic philosophy and logic in the U.S. The same could be said about literature, art history, and the like. And third, and this is the direction in which I move and conclude, an epistemic decolonial shift emerged simultaneously with the social movements of political decolonization during the Cold War. These periodizations in the history of the European university always had consequences in the colonies or ex-colonies (Mignolo 2002b).

However, Kant has also the merit of articulating the concept of critique that in Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud (both European Jews) took a decisive turn: The underlying logic of capital and the underlying logic of consciousness became the target of critical examination. Something has changed between Kant, on the one hand, and Marx and Freud, on the other. In 1937, Max Horkheimer (also a German Jew) articulated that change in terms of traditional and critical theory (1937). By “traditional,” he did not mean to value one type of theory over the other but, rather, to distinguish between two types of theorizing. One type of theorizing, what he called “traditional theory,” occurs when theory is constructed on facticity, i.e., on assumptions that the world is as it looks to us, and theories are necessary to organize and explain what is disorganized and not understood. Natural and social sciences, particularly of the positivist kind, operate at this level. The
second type of theorizing, which he called “critical,” examined the underlying logic and the social consequences of social phenomena and scientific knowledge. Basically, Horkheimer followed the path opened by Marx and Freud in unveiling the darker side of nineteenth-century modernity, the exploitative nature of capitalism, and its consequences in the (de)formation of subjectivity. Marx, Freud, and Horkheimer followed, in Europe, a critical path in the humanities that had started in the colonies three centuries before them.

Neither of them, in fact, has much to say about coloniality, a concept that was not available or even thinkable, although decolonial thinking and doing (as well as thinking by doing) was already in place in European colonies in the Americas. And, the reason was that European thinkers were aware of colonialism but not of coloniality or the fact that the responses to coloniality were not limited to the European critique of colonialism. This is yet another instance showing the need for learning to unlearn. Marx saw colonialism as a derivative phenomenon. Freud was quite unaware of it, and after an initial enthusiasm about the global role of psychoanalysis in India, as has been shown by Ashis Nandi in Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves (1995), Freud’s critical diagnosis remained operative in the domain of European subjectivities. In the 1950s and 1960s, Frantz Fanon showed the limits of psychoanalysis for subjectivities formed in the African diaspora since the sixteenth century and the massive slave trade as well as for North African Arabs and Berbers. What has been forgotten from the eighteenth century on was the critique of colonialism by Bartolomé de Las Casas and the decolonial shift taken by indigenous intellectuals like Waman Puma de Ayala in the Viceroyalty of Peru imposed over the Inca’s Tawantinsuyu (e.g., their social and historical organization conceived as the land of the four corners). Decolonial thinking in South, Central America, and the Caribbean as well as among Latino(a)s in the U.S., builds on what was silenced, partly because not understood and partly because to recognize it would have been dangerous not only for imperial forces but also for critics like Las Casas himself, who would have had to recognize that his critique of colonialism, as important as it was, was equally limited to his dissenting and critical Christian and European perspective. Waman Puma was dwelling in a different memory, in a different language, in a different epistemology, and, when confronting the imperial control by Spanish men of letters and missionaries, he naturally took the decolonial shift: He delinked from the supremacy of theological categories of thought and included them within indigenous (Quechua and Aymara) categories of thoughts. Border thinking was the consequence of Guaman Poma’s doing—his historical narrative and his political proposal to reorganize the Tawantinsuyu and not, of course, the
Viceroyalty of Peru, which was the colonizing job of the Spanish monarchy to which precisely Guaman Poma was decolonially responding.

The emergence of imperial internal critique (Las Casas, Kant, Marx, Freud, and Horkheimer) silenced the emergence and continuation, since the sixteenth century, of the decolonial option, as the critique of modernity from the perspective of coloniality, of which Waman Puma, in the Viceroyalty of Peru under Spanish rules, is one of the foundational examples. Mahatma Gandhi is a second case in British India, under British imperial rule. And, after World War II, the genealogy expanded through the works of Amilcar Cabral (in the Portuguese colonies), Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon (in the French Caribbean), Fausto Reynaga (in Bolivia), and Gloria Anzaldúa (in the U.S.). Our own argument is inscribed and follows this later genealogy. We are now in the middle of a decolonial epistemic shift; and it is from this shift that the role of the humanities could be not only imagined but also reoriented. How shall we understand the decolonial epistemic option? The next question we ask is this: What are the relationships between the decolonial epistemic shift, the humanities, and global citizenship?

The decolonial epistemic option is both geopolitical and body political; that is, it respond to the needs and perspectives of people and regions who do not see that plans and designs made for them by developed countries and corresponding institutions (IMF, World Bank, Monsanto, etc.) as really “convenient” for their regions and the people who live in the region. The decolonial epistemic option is becoming also, for similar reasons, an option for immigrants to developed countries who organized themselves to work to participate (instead of assimilate or accommodate) in the democratization of knowledge, of economy of political life. In other words, the decolonial is an option for all those human beings who want to participate and share rather than be managed and integrated to master plans that are not theirs or to be expelled and marginalized.

The geopolitics of knowing brings to the foreground the relationship between geohistorical locations and epistemology. It came to the foreground during the Cold War and its point of origination was the Third World, not Europe. Argentinian philosopher Enrique Dussel in 1977 launched his philosophy of liberation by asking for the relationship between geopolitics and philosophy and established a correspondence between economic and epistemic dependency in the history of the modern colonial world. In the mid-1990s, Franco Cassano, Italian philosopher from Bary (south of Italy), raised the question of the relationship between the sea and epistemology. And during the same years, Portuguese sociologist Bonaventura de Sousa Santos advanced the idea of an “epistemology of the South,” which became inte-
grated into the philosophical platform of the World Social Forum, initiated in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The three of them raised their voices to claim that there is no knowledge detached from experience. But, more important, that “experience” cannot be reduced to the universality of Human Experience, which was claimed by Kant: “Experiences” have been marked and continue to be marked by the imperial/colonial modern world order. Whether you have been born and raised in London or Beijing, and whether you have been put in those places or move around the world, you cannot escape from “experiencing” the world order you received when you were born and educated—the experience and memories in question are part of the modern colonial world, structured by the colonial and imperial differences. You can try to narcotize imperial and colonial differences if you are trying to assimilate to a dominant culture or to emulate ideas that emerged from bodies embodied in local histories (like Germany or France) and languages that are not the histories and languages in which—unfortunately—your skin and brain were formed. Or you can accept—with pride—what you are, to embody the place you occupy in the colonial matrix of power (metaphorically similar indeed to the places that people occupy in the film The Matrix).

Learning to unlearn becomes then of the essence, since what you have learned was already established by theological and egological (e.g., secular nation-state education) rules of the game. The geopolitical and body-political shifts are decolonial in the sense that they delink (i.e., it is no longer an internal critique, like those of Marx, Freud, or Horkheimer) from the hegemonic history of Western civilization and the corresponding categories of thoughts founded in Greek and Latin and expanded in the six modern European imperial languages (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, and English).

The geopolitical shift emerged in the Third World (during the Cold War) and in the south of Europe (the post-USSR Europe that lost the train of the Enlightenment). The body-political epistemic shift surfaced instead in the U.S., during the Cold War but, above all, after and as a consequence of the Civil Rights movement. The question prompted by the Civil Rights movement was not the relationship between geopolitics and epistemology but, rather, that between identity and epistemology. New spheres of knowledge came into being (women’s studies, gender and sexuality studies, gay and lesbian studies, Afro-American studies, ethnic studies, Latino/Latinas studies, etc.). What do all of them have in common? First, all of them incorporate the knower into the known, the personal and collective memory of communities configured around race, gender, and sexuality. Second, they all introduced into the social sphere of knowledge the perspective from the damnés, those
disposed by colonial racism and patriarchy. And, third, they introduced a new justification of knowledge: knowledge not at the service of the church, the monarch, or the state, but knowledge for liberation, that is, for subjective and epistemic decolonization.

Now, we invite you to think about this double shift in relation to the story we told before on the making of the colonial matrix of power and the colonization of knowledge and being. You would be able to make the connection, on the one hand, between the stumbling block for global citizenship and the structure of knowledge, and on the other, between the coloniality of knowledge and being (which prevents global citizenship) and the critical role the humanities can play to demolish the stumbling block built on the colonial and imperial differences. The ultimate question, then, would be to determine the role of the humanities in dismantling global racism that prevents the full achievement of global citizenship. However, the task is not possible without changing the current common sense, in which happiness is related to accumulation; well-being is predicated on increasing production; and competition and meritocracy are the final destinations of human beings for their full satisfaction. All these goals predicated in the rhetoric of modernity imply running over, exploiting, and killing others; that is, they imply the logic of coloniality without which the ideals of modernity could not be carried out.

The map we draw of the internal critique and decolonial option suggests that there are two different tasks, although complementary, for the humanities. The internal critique (i.e., a critique that maintains the theo-and egopolitics of knowledge) is very prominent in the U.S. and Europe. In the first case, foundations supporting the humanities (Ford, Mellon, Rockefeller, McArthur, etc.) allow for a fundamental critique of the increasing dominance of corporate values within the university. The internal critique is also very prominent, within and outside of the university, in the works of the Euro-American left (followers of Marx, Freud, and the initial years of the Frankfurt school). The decolonial shift brings another critical dimension of the humanities, this time the geo- and body politics of knowledge (the epistemology of the South and of the color of reason) as epistemic and political projects from historical agents, experiences, and memories that were disqualified epistemic subjects. If global citizenship requires the dismantling of global racism, it is from the decolonial shift (from the geo- and body politics of knowledge) that such a task will have its leadership. Last but not least, the decolonial option is at odds with the liberal dictum that we should emphasize what we have in common rather than the differences, for the “common-
ality” is predicated on an idea of the human whose paradigmatic example is a White European heterosexual man.

I heard a dictum (I do not have a scholarly reference, just oral saying, undocumented but no less relevant) attributed to Spanish writer Fernando Savater that goes like this: “We are all equal in that we are different.” Whether Savater said it or not, the formula is very common: It presupposes and defends the commonality of human beings—which means that Human Beings are what hegemonic knowledge allows you to say what they are. The Zapatistas prefer—instead—the following version: “Because we are all equal, we have the right to the difference.” My argument and the task I see for the decolonial humanities goes with the Zapatistas’s dictum. This is one of the fundamental tasks for the decolonial humanities in the twenty-first century: to acknowledge that global citizenship is a myth while global racism is not overcome and to work toward the decolonization of imperial knowledge that engendered the coloniality of being.