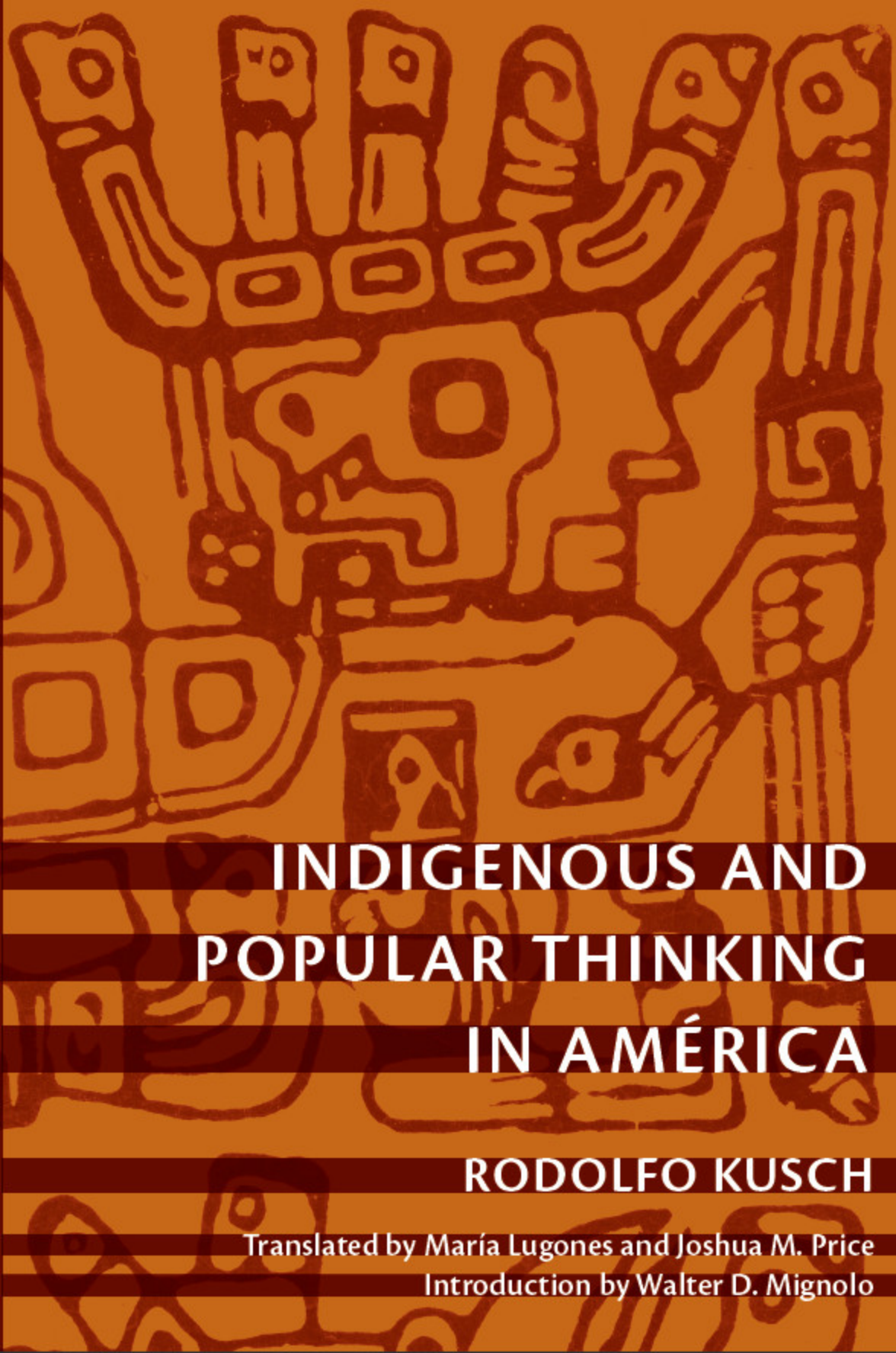

INDIGENOUS AND POPULAR THINKING IN AMÉRICA

RODOLFO KUSCH

Translated by María Lugones and Joshua M. Price

Introduction by Walter D. Mignolo

Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América

A book in the series
LATIN AMERICA OTHERWISE
Languages, Empires, Nations

A series edited by
Walter D. Mignolo, Duke University
Irene Silverblatt, Duke University
Sonia Saldívar-Hull, University of Texas, San Antonio

Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América

RODOLFO KUSCH

Introduction by WALTER D. MIGNOLO
Translated by María Lugones and Joshua M. Price

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS *Durham & London 2010*

© 2010
Duke University Press All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper ∞

Designed by Jennifer Hill
Typeset in Arno Pro by Keystone Typesetting, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication
Data appear on the last printed page of this book.

ABOUT THE SERIES

Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations is a critical series. It aims to explore the emergence and consequences of concepts used to define "Latin America" while at the same time exploring the broad interplay of political, economic, and cultural practices that have shaped Latin American worlds. Latin America, at the crossroads of competing imperial designs and local responses, has been construed as a geocultural and geopolitical entity since the nineteenth century. This series provides a starting point to redefine Latin America as a configuration of political, linguistic, cultural, and economic intersections that demands a continuous reappraisal of the role of the Americas in history, and of the ongoing process of globalization and the relocation of people and cultures that have characterized Latin America's experience. *Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations* is a forum that confronts established geocultural constructions, that rethinks area studies and the disciplinary boundaries, that assesses convictions of the academy and of public policy, and that, correspondingly, demands that the practices through which we produce knowledge and understanding about and from Latin America be subject to rigorous and critical scrutiny.

As Walter Mignolo notes in his introduction to this volume, the work of Rodolfo Kusch (1922–1979) is central to de-

colonial thinking. Kusch's distinctive philosophy, in relating mestizo consciousness and border hermeneutics, can now be recognized as deeply illuminating of such notions as Du Bois's "double consciousness" and Anzaldúa's "mestiza consciousness / la conciencia de la mestiza." It has been crucial for the contemporary work of Mignolo, María Lugones, Rengifo Vázquez, Pablo Wright, and Ricardo Salas Astrain, among many others. Originally published in 1970, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América* is the first of Kusch's work to be translated into English. It details a philosophical journey that takes him from the western coast of South America into the highlands of Peru and Bolivia, from the Latin American mimesis of European modernity—deeply entrenched in the intellectual classes—to an immersion in the indigenous cosmology of Quechua, Aymara, and Chipaya inhabitants from the highlands. Between the urban middle class and the Indians of Bolivia lies a social strata (*el pueblo*) characterized by "popular thinking," a mode of thinking more akin to that of the Indian than to that of the middle classes. Kusch's goal is to identify and help to activate an indigenous and popular way of thinking which interacts with, but at the same time differs from, derivative ways of thinking entrenched in the urban middle class, be they liberal or Marxist. Thus Kusch offers a critique of Marxism and an understanding of Peronism that are logical consequences of understanding popular ways of thinking rather than of attention only to the instrumentality of social claims made by the working class.

Kusch's parents migrated from Germany to Argentina before he was born. As Mignolo suggests, Kusch's notion of a "mestizo consciousness" derives from the experience of displaced Europeans recognizing their out-of-placeness in a foreign context. Yet it is the modernity that Europeans brought with them to America that Kusch seeks to distinguish from indigenous thinking, a modernity with an ideological predisposition to judge problems from a purportedly scientific point of view, to indiscriminately presuppose democratic ideals, and to expect certain predetermined forms of religiosity.

This book has three primary goals: to uncover basic aspects of indigenous thinking, to weigh the possibilities that thought offers, and to establish how it articulates with elements of European modernity. Kusch identifies a connection between indigenous thought and interiority, affectivity, and attention to emotional experience, as well as a resistance to prioritiz-

ing the rational over the affective, the exterior world over the interior of the human being. By so doing Kusch uncovers European philosophy's repressed subjectivity, its drive to situate logic before subjectivity, and its inclination to place the person at the service of the institution, instead of the other way round. Kusch's relentless critiques of the idea of "development," which was very much alive during his lifetime, serve to expand his questioning of the instrumentality of Western principles of knowing and understanding. In light of these tendencies, he examines the meaning of knowledge in an indigenous context—a knowledge, he shows, that focuses not on causality (why), but on modality (how). In exploring the articulation of indigenous with urban thinking, he assesses, for example, the implications of forming cooperatives, noting particularly the failure of cooperatives that outsiders organized in Bolivia in the 1960s, despite a tradition of a communal system of reciprocity, *ayni*, which is several thousand years old. Not to be confused with Lévi-Strauss or with the Castañeda of *The Teachings of Don Juan*, Kusch approaches his investigations not only as a constant process of shifting the geopolitics of knowing and understanding, but in a relentlessly de-colonial manner.

Bringing to his analysis a knowledge of Western philosophy, a deep understanding of the foundation of indigenous thought (Guaman Poma de Ayala, Popol Vuh, Huarochiri manuscript), and a sound understanding of Argentinian history, Kusch identifies "negation" as the underpinning of both popular and indigenous rationality (two distinct ethnic configurations). What one learns from Kusch is to dwell at the intersection of indigenous and European legacies, and to be constantly mindful of "the popular."

CONTENTS

xi ILLUSTRATIONS
xiii INTRODUCTION
Immigrant Consciousness
Walter D. Mignolo
lv TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION
lxxi PROLOGUE TO THE THIRD EDITION
lxxv PROLOGUE TO THE FIRST EDITION

1 ONE
Américan Thinking
8 TWO
Understanding
15 THREE
Limit
26 FOUR
Knowledge
34 FIVE
Ritual
41 SIX
The Theory of the Turn
52 SEVEN
Divine Teaching

70 EIGHT
Indigenous Logic
81 NINE
Symmetry and Truth
89 TEN
Salvation and Economy
102 ELEVEN
Salvation and Solution
115 TWELVE
Popular Thinking
124 THIRTEEN
Seminal Thinking
135 FOURTEEN
Seminal Economy
144 FIFTEEN
Infantile Seminality
151 SIXTEEN
Thinking the "*Así*"
158 SEVENTEEN
The Crossroads of Mere *Estar*
165 EIGHTEEN
Recovering the Absolute

173 NOTES
195 BIBLIOGRAPHY
203 INDEX

ILLUSTRATIONS

lxxii *Frontispiece* Rodolfo Kusch with the monolith in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia.

3 1 Map of Perú, according to Guaman Poma

6 2 The indigenous philosopher, according to Guaman Poma

21 3 The correlation between the inward-directed (*entrancia*) and the outward-directed (*saliencia*) aspects of the psyche

24 4 Detail of the Gateway of the Sun

27 5 The witch, or *yatiri*, Apaza Rimachi

36 6 The slaughter of a black sheep during a *qharira*

39 7 The foretelling ritual with coca leaves performed by Ceferino Choque

42 8 The *yatiri* Ceferino Choque during a ritual of divination using coca leaves

46 9a–d The four ages, according to Guaman Poma

50 10 Personage appearing on both sides of the fret on the lower part of the Gateway of the Sun

54 11 The church of Santo Domingo del Cuzco

60 12 The fundamental concepts and triadic structures of pre-Columbian religion

62 13 Comparison between the religious ideas of the present-day *yatiris* of the Andean highlands and the triadic structures of Inca religion, the symbols of the Bennett Monolith, and Guaman Poma's trinity
66 14 The presumed altar of the temple
71 15a–d The *chiuchis*, or lead pieces, that are sold in the markets of the Andean highlands
83 16 Unfolded decoration of the monolith uncovered by Wendell C. Bennett in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia
87 17 Detail of the back of the monolith uncovered by Carlos Ponce Sanginés in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia
96 18 Two *campesino* informants from the community of Copacabana, in Toledo, Bolivia
104 19 Comparison between the basic principles of Western and indigenous thinking
106 20 Circular Chipaya huts
112 21 The creation of the world, according to Guaman Poma
116 22 The four dimensions of contradiction within which scientific statements move

INTRODUCTION
Immigrant Consciousness

WALTER D. MIGNOLO

RODOLFO KUSCH: A SOCIOHISTORICAL PROFILE

Gunter Rodolfo Kusch (1922–1979) was the only child of Ricardo Carlos Kusch and Elsa María Dorotea Tschunke de Kusch, a German couple who moved to Argentina from Germany shortly after the First World War had ended. When Kusch was four years old, his father passed away. His late teen years coincided with an exciting decade in Buenos Aires history: 1940–1950. This is the decade when the Second World War came to an end, the decade of Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Perón, and of an intense intellectual and cultural life. A "native" intelligentsia was taking over, a "mestizo consciousness" that nevertheless had its origins among those of European descent (primarily Spanish, Italian, and German). Kusch explored this mestizo consciousness in his first book (*La seducción de la barbarie*). This consciousness reflected the experiences of a community of displaced Europeans in coexistence with the Indigenous population, a dense and strong presence that Kusch himself encountered in northwest Argentina and in Bolivia. Although the Afro-population had practically vanished from Argentina's imaginary by Kusch's time, Kusch was aware of its presence in América. (Kusch consistently uses "América" in all his writing, only rarely mentioning "Latin America"—a telling practice that is coherent with the philosophical explorations he conducted throughout his life.)

As Argentina emerged from the so called "década infame"

(1930–40), a demographic and sociohistorical shift took place, accompanied by an intense intellectual dialogue, lead by Silvina Ocampo and the journal *Sur*, which she had founded in 1931.[1] *Sur* was notable for its cosmopolitan character, and Ocampo counted Waldo Frank and José Ortega y Gasset among her most enthusiastic supporters, and the Argentine writers Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares among her closest collaborators. When Kusch published *La seducción de la barbarie* in 1953, he caught a wave of intellectual and political debates that gave little notice to the influence of *Sur*; these debates emerged in the last years of Perón's presidency and immediately after his fall, moving decidedly away from enchantment with Europe toward interrogation of the troubled colonial and, therefore, racial histories in America. In *América Profunda*, published in 1962, Kusch intensified his philosophical reflections anchored in "another history." He described that "other history"—distinctive in its profile and coexisting with European history in America—with metaphors such as "seducción de la barbarie," "América profunda," as "América vegetal," among many others. Crucial to understanding Kusch's sustained meditations, from *La seducción de la barbarie* to *Geocultural del Hombre Americano* (1976) and *Esbozo de una antropología filosófica Americana* (1978), is the existence of a European history as transplanted since its conquest and colonization into the history of "América profunda," a double history at once. On the one hand, Indian memories throughout the Americas needed to be reinscribed in conflictive dialogue and tension with the presence of people of European descent, as well as with the emergence of social institutions (economics, politics, family) modeled on European social organization. It could no longer be an internal transformation as it had been for Europe. On the other hand, the reinscription that couldn't avoid European interference was, and continues to be, one that *re-produces the difference*. For the Indigenous people who decided, through history, not to assimilate, it was essential to resist the fantasy of a bygone past and instead to maintain the reality of a present in which the reinscription of the difference was crucial for just living. After all, if for any European it would have been difficult to live in the skin of an Indigenous person, there would be reason to assume that an Indigenous person would have difficulty living in the skin of a European. The awareness that the states in South America were colonial (or, at their best, modern-colonial), while those in France, England, and Germany were modern-imperial was a

starting point both for the emergence of the "nationalist left" (Juan José Herenández-Arregui) and the de-colonial option (Rodolfo Kusch), both options grounded in the subjective and historical experience of Peronism.

THE EPISTEMIC AND POLITICAL MEANING OF IMMIGRANT CONSCIOUSNESS

I could not have made the preceding statements without having read and re-read the work of Rodolfo Kusch. Furthermore, it is in light of the statements I made before that Kusch's idea of "mestizo consciousness" can and shall be understood. For Kusch, "mestizo" has nothing to do with biology, with mixed bloods, with the color of one's skin or the form of one's nose—it is, instead, a matter of consciousness.

"Mestizo consciousness" is a conceptualization that undoubtedly emerges from a body that experiences *existentia Americana*, similar to what the Jamaican philosopher Lewis Gordon has termed and explored as *existentia Africana*.[2] Indeed, approximately fifty years before Kusch published his first book, W. E. B. Du Bois, a U.S. sociologist of African descent, was sensing a similar cultural discomfort, albeit as a black man, rather than as an immigrant of European descent, a discomfort coming from the experience of a history different from that of Kusch. Du Bois found in the concept of "consciousness" a tool for the articulation of his experience translated into a term familiar in the human and social sciences.[3] But his "consciousness"—that is, the way in which he experienced "consciousness"—was different from that of Kusch; a person of African descent in the Americas experiences life and his own existence differently than does a person of European descent. Both, however, share a common experience, the experience of the displaced in relation to a dominant order of the world to which they do not belong. The consciousness of being-such and the awareness of not-being-such (Kusch, for example, being neither European nor Indian), as well as the sensing of a tension between being-such-and-such (Du Bois, for example, being black and American, when being American was assumed to mean being white), points toward the sphere of experience Gloria Anzaldúa articulated as "the mestiza consciousness/la conciencia de la mestiza."[4] It is worthwhile to underline, however, the grammatical twist in Anzaldúa's phrase. She is talking not about "mestiza consciousness" but about "the consciousness of the mestiza," which is how

I would translate "la conciencia de la mestiza," the title of the last chapter in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Likewise, we should remember, the title of Rigoberta Menchú's *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchu y así me nació la conciencia* (1982), badly translated into English as *I, Rigoberta Menchú, an Indian Woman from Guatemala*—a translation that preferred exoticism to philosophical and political meaning, and that trumpeted Benjamin Franklin's exaltation of the individual, the "I." Finally, the Afro-Colombian Zapata Olivella, self-identified as mulatto, conceived a "mestizo consciousness" to capture the historical essence of the languages, religions, cultures, ways of life, sensibilities, and subjectivities that transformed Anahuac, Abya Yala, and Tawantinsuyu into what Kusch calls "América." For Olivella, as for Kusch, *mestizo* acquires a meaning that goes beyond the biological, a child born of European and Indian.

In retrospect, and in the more recent spectrum in which consciousness has been articulated de-colonially (Du Bois, Anzaldúa, Menchú), it would be apropos to rephrase Kusch's "mestizo consciousness" as "immigrant consciousness," the consciousness of the European immigrant who arrived in the Americas in the late-nineteenth century and early twentieth, and who, instead of assimilating, reacted critically to the displaced conditions of European immigrants in a country already in the hands of Creoles of Spanish descent and mestizos with mixed blood and a European soul and mentality.

Immigrant consciousness, in other words, is an assumed condition of existence, an existence out of place. This was the consciousness of people of European descent, who inhabited a place whose history was not the history of their ancestors; of the Indigenous peoples or ab-originals, who found themselves out of place when their form of life, institutions, educational systems, and economies were displaced, destroyed, and replaced with ways of life and institutions of migrants from European countries. Africans, coming from several parts of the continent, with their own different languages and beliefs, forms of life and institutions found themselves in a land whose histories did not belong to their ancestors and, in contrast to the Europeans, in a land whose social structures placed them at the very bottom of the social scale. "Immigrant consciousness—double consciousness, mestiza consciousness, mulatto consciousness, intercultural consciousness (as Indigenous people in Ecuador maintain to this day), maroon consciousness (as it has been established among Afro-

Andeans in Ecuador)—contains diverse expressions and experiences of the same condition of existence: the awareness of coloniality of being; the awareness of being out of place with regard to the regulations (i.e., the cosmology) of modernity; the awareness, in short, of the colonial wound. It is interesting to note that "critical" intellectuals formulated the idea of peripheral, alternative modernities; this is a complaisant position that mimics dissent, while in fact reproducing colonial standards, albeit with superficial variations. Immigrant consciousnesses (double, mestiza, indigenous, maroon) are different manifestations of an-other paradigm: the paradigm constituted by forms of de-colonial consciousness whose horizon is a pluri-versal horizon conceived as transmodernity.[5]

When one looks at the basic belief system of modernity from the perspective of critical displaced consciousness marked by coloniality of being, one realizes that the modern subject has been constituted by a monotopic consciousness and shaped both the imperial concept of subject and subjectivity itself.[6] Working toward the de-coloniality of being implies de-linking from the imperial concept of the subject and from any pretense to uni-versality, that is, from modernity itself, which has largely been constructed from the experience of the monotopic consciousness of the modern subject in its diversity, from theology to secularism, from empire to nations, from science to philosophy, from Spain to England, from Catholicism to Protestantism, from liberalism to Marxism.[7] All these variations exist within the monotopic consciousness of the modern and imperial subject. Kusch's reflections, sustained over more than twenty years, have greatly contributed to a form of de-colonial consciousness that can connect with colonial subjects of European descent in other latitudes, like New Zealand, Australia, or South Africa (e.g., J. M. Coetzee). And one realizes that the critical de-colonial consciousness, in its variety, can no longer be conceived as alternative, peripheral, subaltern—or what have you—to modern consciousness, but as a consciousness-other that is specifically de-colonial in character. Kusch not only elaborated the concept of "immigrant consciousness," he inhabited it. He thought within that colonial dwelling in the same way that Descartes or Heidegger thought within an imperial one.

For the modern or postmodern reader who suspects that I am thinking in dichotomies, I will introduce two disclaimers. There are many dichotomies between the imperial monotopic and diverse modernity (the dif-

ferent moments and types of historical colonialism around the globe), and the pluri-versality of local histories with which European modernity entered into contact for economic, political, and epistemic control, as well as for control of subjectivity. Coloniality of power earmarks precisely that struggle between the coloniality of power and the de-colonial projects. The monotopism of European diverse modernity is framed in the legacies of Greece and Rome and of the Western Roman Empire from its revival in Spanish and British imperialism. Ottobah Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* (1787) makes it clear that for a maroon consciousness there is no difference between imperial Spain, France, Holland, or England in the management of enslaved Africans. Thus, the monotopic diversity of Western modernity is visible from the gaze of decolonial consciousness and not, in fact, from the consciousness of the modern subject, which, like the great contributions of Las Casas or Marx, remain within the limited horizon of the modern subject (and imperial) consciousness.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PROFILE FOR AND OF KUSCH'S PHILOSOPHY

The following paragraphs are addressed to the reader unfamiliar with Argentine and Bolivian history. To include such a note on history already implies coloniality of knowledge; most likely it would be unnecessary to include a similar note on the history of Germany if I were to introduce, for example, the work of Martin Heidegger. Coloniality of knowledge works by creating hierarchy in a lineal space and silencing the simultaneity of the geopolitics of knowledge and of being. Being in America and in Argentina, where imperial and colonial power relations are in effect, is different than being in Germany and in Europe. Consequently, the only reason to "begin" in Europe and then see what "can be done" in America—How can we think? How can we be?—is already and always a conscious or unconscious act of self-colonization. Kusch's entire effort, from the beginning to the end of his intellectual career, was a struggle to cut the umbilical cord of the coloniality of knowledge and of being.

Argentina obtained independence from Spain in 1810. A turbulent period of civil war ensued, leading to the "dictatorship" of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the "barbarous" leadership of Juan Facundo Quiroga. Rosas

and Quiroga dominated Argentine political life until 1852, the former doing so in Buenos Aires, the latter in the western provinces of La Rioja and San Juan. Justo José de Urquiza was the third "caudillo" and the lord of what is called the Argentine Mesopotamia, in the northeast, between the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers. Like Rosas and Quiroga, Urquiza was a rancher, a statesman, and a military man. After a series of internal conflicts, Urquiza overcame Rosas and served as president of the Argentine Federation from 1854 to 1860. Known as the period that started the "National Organization," that was the moment in which Argentinian leaders turned in the direction that global history was taking under the influence of new (in relation to Spain and Portugal) imperial designs. The emerging imperial powers were no longer monarchies and the Christian Church, but developing nation-states: France, England, and Germany. Furthermore, the United States was already on its way to becoming not only a powerful postcolonial nation, but also a new world leader. Its influence was felt already by the leaders of the national organization, following Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's formula "civilization and barbarism," which he posited in *Facundo* (1845), a pro-civilization manifesto that critiqued Rosas and Quiroga as representatives of barbarism. Sarmiento's formula defined the terms of the historical, political, economic, and existential dilemma in every country, but primarily those of South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.[8]

The history of Argentina from 1860 to 1916 was performed and written by an elite that aligned itself with Europe (and sometimes the United States) and, secondarily, with Canada and Australia. Some (like José Ingenieros) thought that Argentina and Australia were moving toward their imperial destiny, that Rosas and Quiroga were buried in a barbarian past, forever superseded by the march of civilization toward a bright future. The interregnum between 1860 and 1916 coincided with the spread of the Industrial Revolution and the growing demand for natural resources from non-European countries. Starting in the 1860s, British railroads were installed in Argentina. Argentina became "el granero del mundo," and even Louis Ferdinand Celine included an episode of wealthy Argentinians in Paris in his *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932). But prosperity created the conditions for the development of unintended and unexpected (for the ruling class) consequences. European immigration intensified in the middle of the nineteenth century, but the immigrants weren't the kind that

Sarmiento had envisioned. They were European, they were from the lower classes and seeking opportunities that Europe did not offer them. Thus, in 1916 the Argentine elite, old families of Spanish descent, were faced with the first president who represented the middle class: Bernardo de Yrigoyen. Kusch's parents arrived in 1920, and Rodolfo was born, two years later, in the heart, so to speak, of the middle class. Thirty years later, Kusch translated his experience of the geohistorical (born and raised in Argentina) and of the body-social class (at a particular moment in the formation of Argentine middle class, which began to vanish after 1970) into a sustained philosophical reflection.[9]

Benefiting from the tragedy of the First World War, Argentina enjoyed a decade of prosperity. But Argentina's Roaring Twenties ended with the financial crisis of 1930, and splendors were fast converted into miseries. It should have been clear, by then, that peripheral economies may benefit from disasters in economic centers when those events create a need for natural resources. But peripheral economies suffer twice the consequences of those financial crises that central economies do. If 1920–30 was the "golden decade," 1930–40 was inscribed in the history of Argentina as the "infamous decade." Responsibility for economic recovery moved to the industrial sector (which had emerged in the Roaring Twenties); this also signaled the decay of the prosperous landed aristocracy that occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth. Industrialization, however, requires workers, and the available workers were not necessarily immigrants, as they had previously established themselves in the official administration, as small retailers, as teachers and university professors, as professionals of various kinds. Immigrant families generally dreamed of having their sons become "Doctors," which meant either physicians or lawyers, and thus few immigrants were available to join the working class. The working class was drawn from the provinces, but the provincial immigrants were likewise unavailable as workers. Immigrants who arrived in the second half of the nineteenth century and established themselves in the provinces managed to acquire, at the least, small pieces of property, which positioned them as a sort of landed middle class. Less educated than the urban middle class, they were nevertheless unwilling to join the industrial work force.[10]

It was, instead, the *cabecitas negras* (black heads), as they were portrayed in the vocabulary of the elite. Cabecitas negras—who in Kusch's

reflections appear next to the Chilean *rotos* and the Peruvian *cholos*—were dark-skinned people from Northwest Argentina (Santiago del Estero, Catamarca, Tucumán, Salta, and Jujuy) and from Bolivia. Coincidentally, this is the region of Collasuyu in Inca cosmological and administrative organization. In framing "el pensamiento Americano," Kusch turned to Waman Puma de Ayala's "Mapa Mundi" (Kusch or the editor of Kusch'complete works described it as "Mapa del Perú"), and a recent pedagogical rendering by the Bolivian historian Teresa Gisbert de Mesa further illuminates the suppressed memory expressed in the map of Argentina.[11] If, for example, the point of reference is Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, the workers would have come from Northwest Argentina; but if the point of reference is Cuzco, the center of Tawantinsuyu, they would have come from Collasuyu, that is, from Southeast Bolivia.

The cabecitas negras became the emblem of Peronismo, of Perón's "el pueblo argentino." Juan Domingo Perón was elected president of Argentina in 1946, with 56 percent of the vote, and deposed by a military coup in 1955, when he left the country. Perón returned to Argentina in 1973, and in October of that year he was again elected president. He died the following year, after nine turbulent months of economic difficulties and political violence.

The first edition of the book presented here, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, was published in Mexico in 1970 as *El pensamiento indígena Americano*. The second edition was published in Argentina in 1973 with the current title, *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América*, and a third edition followed in 1977. In the prologue to the second edition Kusch stated, "The motive to which this second edition responds is evident. The year 1973 marks an important stage in the country. Argentina has awoken to the possibility of its own authenticity. Among all the economic and social proposals of every sort that are easily adopted as a solution, arises a clear cultural proposal, sprouting from the deepest roots of the *pueblo*. My wish is that these pages be useful toward an understanding of that proposal, so that it will not be misunderstood one more time."[12] Kusch is referring here to the second presidency of Juan Domingo Perón, a proposal that indeed was embezzled once again. Peronismo carried from the beginning the seed of its own failure: what Kusch foresaw in his philosophical reflections—a state founded on popular thinking, not on the thinking of the elite—had finally arrived. However, popular thinking, as

Kusch understood it, did not move Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Duarte de Perón. One could guess that, today, Evo Morales, in Bolivia, is moved by thinking entrenched in and with Indigenous thinking. Perón may have been a populista (in the sense of moving and obtaining popular support), but he was not a popular thinker in the way Evo Morales could be described as an Indian thinker. Peronismo, in any event, was converted quickly into one more political party whose leaders increasingly detached themselves from popular thought, at least as Kusch defined it. But what is Kusch's understanding of popular thought and of the popular? These may not correspond to what Perón (or George W. Bush or any other American president) refers to as "the American people." In other words, "popular thought" is not necessarily "the people's thought."

The fall of Perón and the rhetoric of La Revolución Libertadora, in 1955, not only incurred political and economic consequences, but also profoundly affected subjectivities. The traditional Left and the extreme Right coincided in their critique of Peronismo, although, as it has been throughout the history of socialism and communism, they did so for reasons that opposed them (the Left and the Right) in content but not in principle. A "new Left" emerged from the debris of Peronismo, a sort of national Marxism, from within which José Hernández Arregui and Jorge Abelardo Ramos surfaced as two of the most clear and articulate voices. Hernández Arregui distinguished the new Left from the "Marxist Left" which had been, since the Russian Revolution, an institution of European immigrants out of touch with Argentinian history and sensibility. The Marxist Left coincided with the liberal Right position of the Argentinian oligarchy in critiquing Perón. In contrast, Hernández Arregui (along with Ramos, Arturo Jauretche, and others) opposed to the "national Left," initiated a theoretical and historical discourse.[13] Kusch was not part of this "spirit" of Buenos Aires, and his references (Indigenous histories and thoughts) were also alien to the radical intellectuals of the national Left. However, Kusch and the national Left coincided in their sympathy for Perón and in their critique of the Marxist Left.

Hernández Arregui and Kusch—of Spanish and of German descent, respectively—were both born and raised in the middle class, and were radically critical of it. They initiated in Argentina two distinct but complementary transformations. Hernández Arregui distanced himself from the Communist Party and the Eurocentric Left in the colonies, and through the

framework of Peronism articulated the platform and the argument for a nationalist Left. Hernández Arregui's position evolved through his analysis and interpretation of global forces, of the role of England and the United States in the twentieth century, and of the persistence of *coloniaje* (coloniality) in the Americas. Hernández Arregui was in tune with Carlos Montenegro, the Bolivian founder of the Movimiento Liberación Nacional (MLN). The MLN had led the revolution of 1952, but had fallen in the hands of Gonzálo Sánchez de Losada, just as the Peronist Party had led the revolution of 1945, then fallen in the hands of Carlos Saúl Menem. González de Losada and Saúl Menem cleared the path for neoliberalism in the region, under the guidance of Geoffrey Sach and Domingo Cavallo, respectively. Hernández Arregui, Montenegro, and Alvaro Vieira Pinto (a Brazilian and the author of *Conciencia y realidad nacional* [1960]) followed, directly or indirectly, the path opened in the 1920s by José Carlos Mariátegui of Perú.[14] This formidable tradition of thought was, in the Americas, the equivalent of what Antonio Gramsci was in Europe at the time and of what Ashis Nandy and Ranajit Guha were (in the late 1970s) and are for the history of ideas in British India. These three responses carried the imprint of geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge—knowledge and understanding engendered in response to needs created in the modern-colonial world by imperial (within Europe) and colonial (outside Europe: Spanish and Ibero-America and British India) epistemic and ontological differences.

Kusch followed a parallel, although distinct path. While Montenegro (followed by Zavaleta Mercado), Pinto, and Hernández Arregui rethought and remade Marxism and the Left introduced in the Americas by immigrants of European descent in the late nineteenth century, Kusch engaged himself in de-colonial thinking.[15] There are no traces in Kusch's work of Aimée Césaire or Frantz Fanon, who, at the time, were advancing the de-colonial option. However, parallel philosophical and political paths, while not connected with each other, often share common historical and sociological experiences: in this case, coloniaje was lived and experienced, though differently, by both Césaire and Kusch. While Hernández Arregui responded to coloniality by articulating the national Left, Kusch responded by articulating de-colonial thinking and thus advancing arguments toward the de-colonial option.

Although Kusch was radically critical of the Left and of Marxism, he never singled out individual Marxists for censure, instead more generally

identifying Marxism with members of the urban middle class in Buenos Aires and with immigrants of European descent. In retrospect it appears that while Kusch does not mention Hernández Arregui or Ramos, and vice versa, they have more in common than they might have thought. The three of them introduced into Argentinean social, political, and philosophical thought a positive and analytic profile of Peronism that can hardly be ignored by contemporary historians, social scientists, area-studies specialists in the United States, or cultural critics. Henández Arregui, Ramos, and Kusch, each in his own manner, thought deep and hard from the colonial wound infringed by imperial histories. In reading Hernández Arregui's *La formación de la conciencia nacional* and *Imperialismo y cultura* one remembers both the five hundred years of imperial and colonial histories (during which Argentina was a point of arrival and passage toward Tawantinsuyu) and the imperial presence primarily of England, as it simultaneously managed both new colonies (like India) and purportedly independent nation-states that were in fact only rhetorically sovereign.

Kusch followed another route. Colonial legacies are always present, but whereas Hernández Arregui focused on the coloniality of economics and authority, Kusch focused on the coloniality of knowledge and of being. By concentrating on knowledge and being, Kusch shed light on how imperial control of knowledge and the imperial transformation of colonial subjects were as powerful and insidious as control of authority (politics, international relations) and control of economics. Both Hernández Arregui and Kusch were risky and creative thinkers, and both were eclipsed by the growing discourse on development and modernization, which reoriented coloniality in economics and politics, and by several of the consequences of development and modernization: the popularity, in Argentina, of structuralism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, and the Althusserian version of Marxism. As the complementary forces of economic development, military control of authority, and new waves of ideas, particularly those coming from France, took hold, thinkers such as Hernández Arregui and Kusch were relegated to the past, to a traditional Argentina, even as Argentina was entering a new period: newness in economics and newness in knowledge (postmodernity, structural anthropology, deconstruction) and being (psychoanalysis).

While Hernández Arregui's analysis brought Argentine history together with global-imperial history, Kusch's analysis was rooted exclusively in the

history of Argentina and in the Indigenous histories of Bolivia, Mexico, and Guatemala, particularly the histories and memories contained in the Indigenous languages Aymara, Quechua, Nahuatl, Tzotzil, and Maya-Quiché. From the first, Kusch grounded his analysis in sixteenth-century Indigenous documents (mainly Waman Puma de Ayala's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*; the Huarochirí Manuscript; the Popol Vuh; and the Aztec codices), drawing as well from direct experiences and interviews with Indigenous persons in Bolivia, which he pursued in his own time. He also construed his own locus of enunciation, assuming a critical stance toward his existence and experience as an intellectual of the Argentine middle class. As such, he was distanced and detached from both the elite that ruled the country and the Indigenous people who inhabited the north of Argentina and America, who were "strange" to him. While people of European descent and of Indigenous or ab-original descent both inhabit America, they inhabit different territories; they live within the same state (Bolivia or Argentina), but they do not belong to the same nation. And, as nations, they have different relations to the state in terms of citizenship, economics, and rights. Kusch understood and felt what it means to belong to a nation comprising people of European descent, with all their privileges, who live in the same state with people who inhabit an-other memory, one that the state, being identified with people of European descent, denies. This dilemma is at the core of the current process of rewriting the Bolivian constitution, under the leadership of Evo Morales. The future of the gains of Evo Morales and the Marcha Hacia el Socialismo (MAS) will very much depend on the resolution of this dilemma, which is also faced by the Bolivian Left. Perhaps reading Waman Puma de Ayala, in addition to Kusch, could contribute to the heated debates taking place in Bolivia today.

The experience of the strangeness of co-living and inhabiting different memories and therefore territories (in the Indigenous sense of territoriality) was one of the engines that ignited Kusch's thought. As Greek thinking was to Heidegger, Indigenous thinking was to Kusch—two distinct histories, languages, and memories, each with an inherent set of philosophical reflections. They coexist linked by the colonial epistemic difference, that is, by the coloniality of knowledge and of being. For example, I was familiar with Heidegger before I registered for my first course in Greek philosophy at the Universidad de Córdoba; about twenty-five years later, however, someone in Tucumán chanced to ask me if I knew of

Rodolfo Kusch, and I had to respond in the negative. I was at the office of the director of the cultural supplement of *La Gaceta*, a well-known newspaper in Tucumán. Why did I, in Argentina, know about Heiddegger's philosophical investigations, deep-seated in the history of Europe and of Germany, and not of Kusch, who was reflecting in (and not on) the colonial history of South America and Argentina? Asking this question is another way to understand Kusch's relentless interrogation of *ser* from within feeling, more than from the perspective, the eye, the object, the visual that Kusch critiques as constitutive of *ser* and of the modern subject(ivity). The answer is the alienation and the blindness of the coloniality of knowledge and of being disguised by the rhetoric of modernity, of *ser alguien* and the devaluation of *estar* and *estar siendo*: two distinctive orientations to life and to living. As an Argentine philosopher of the middle class, Kusch is torn between *ser*, embraced by the middle class, and *estar*, which characterizes both Indigenous and popular thinking. At this point it becomes obvious that Kusch is being torn between two poles that he himself inhabits.[16]

"Popular thinking" or "popular thought" is located in a sociohistorical experience that is neither that of the Indian nor of the urban middle class, and certainly not that of the elite. Consequently, *pueblo* (*populus*)—*popular* refers to a sector of the "Argentine people"—is an ambiguous concept. It refers to the people who inhabit the territory of the nation-state. On the other hand, not all the inhabitants are citizens. In terms of social class, Kusch's "pueblo" is formed by those "de-classed" by the war of independence and the civil wars that contributed to the formation of Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century. In Kusch's argument *Martin Fierro* is for Argentina the equivalent of Homer's epics for Plato and Aristotle: these poems are not just narrative, but philosophical reflections on life and society, on politics and destiny. As is well known, the character Martin Fierro is a *gaucho*, a gaucho is a substantial sector of the history of Kusch's pueblo, and the poem in which José Hernández immortalized Martin Fierro is a benchmark of "pensamiento popular." Kusch, however, often refers to persons identified with the *populus* as "criollos." In Argentine's everyday vocabulary of the middle and upper class, *gaucho* and *criollo* are synonymous. The gaucho or criollo is a sociohistorical human type whose habitat is the plains (the Argentine pampas, including regions south of the provinces of Córdoba and Santa Fé); the Argentine "Litoral," Corrientes

and Entre Ríos; and the northeast of Uruguay and the south of Brazil, where they are called "gauderios." However, *criollo* is a category more extensive than *gaucho*: if every gaucho fits the description of criollo, not every criollo is a gaucho. In the canonical histories of Argentina, the pueblo is characterized by its folklore, manifested in music, narrative, and poetry.[17] For Kusch, all of this is the surface manifestation of philosophical thinking, *pensamiento popular*.

The identification of gauchos or criollos is tied not so much to ethnicity as it is to social status. Neither proletarian nor lumpen-proletarian, they are alien to the Industrial Revolution. Their emergence as a social configuration is part and parcel of the process of Spanish and Portuguese conquest and colonization of the plains. They are recognized as experts in all activities relative to the plains, being masters of the horse and wise in reading the signs of nature, which helps them avoid getting lost in the immense Pampas, where the references for the way are bound to the knowledge of the grass, the tracks, the plants, and the stars. Ethnically, gauchos could have been criollos; mestizos (offspring of Spanish or Portuguese and Indians); Indians who abandoned their communities of origin to join the coming community; criollos of African descent; mulattoes (first- or second-generation children of Europeans and Africans); or Zambos (offspring of Afros and Indians). But not all of Kusch's pueblo and pensamiento popular are located in the history and legacies of the gauchos, for criollos could be, in Kusch's conceptualization, the transformation of gauchos into a social group identified as criollos once the gaucho had vanished as a social type.[18] Criollos are, according to Kusch, not just people of Spanish descent from the provinces of Argentina. The provinces in question will be not only those that gauchos inhabited, but also the northwestern regions of Collasuyu that became the provinces of Santiago del Estero to Jujuy (see map of Perú) in the construction of Argentine nation-state, a region of dry land and Andean landscape that prompted a lifestyle quite different from that of the gauchos. Kusch's pueblo points toward a vast population of Argentine provinces: from the Pampas and the ancient Collasuyu to the outskirts of Buenos Aires, where migrants from the provinces stop and dwell. Kusch devoted an entire book, *De la mala vida porteña* (1966), to pensamiento popular in the city. Pensamiento popular here is expressed in *lunfardo*, the Buenos Aires version of a common "deviation" of the official language of the nation, in this case, Spanish.

One scholarly version attributes the formation of lunfardo to the wave of European immigration starting at the end of the nineteenth century. This is the Eurocentered version of lunfardo. Since the population who migrated to Buenos Aires were also people with speech, they carried with them a vocabulary that was formed in the provinces, not only among gauchos and criollos, but also among Afros and Indians. Lunfardo, as vocabulary and expression (not so much as grammar, which maintains basically the Castilian grammar), is a language that integrates expressions of de-classed people, be they criollos, people of Indian and Afro descent, and even the late-immigrating Spaniards and Italians. But what is key in Kusch's reflection is not so much the sociohistorical and ethnic formation of lunfardo, but the philosophy that is imbedded in it: that is "el pensamiento popular" as conceived and manifested in lunfardo. Kusch's observes in the prologue to *De la mala vida porteña*:

> When someone says to us "rajá de ahí" ("get out of here"), we assume that we are being informed to leave.[19] We are sure of that. But to say that an expression is only useful to convey information is too superficial. . . . The one uttering that phrase is not only informing us to leave, he is also, as we say, "nos borra del mapa" ("erasing us from the map"). That is because language is useful to modify reality magically, in this case by suppressing what is bothersome. . . . In sum, words inform first, but then they serve us as a magic fluid, and finally they denounce our true and secret thinking about life and the world.[20]

Here we have Kusch's philosophical method. From anecdotes and verbal expressions (*dichos y decires populares*), from Aymara (mainly) and other languages' vocabularies, Kusch derives, infers, interprets the philosophically unsaid in the expression or the anecdote. One of the anecdotes is found in chapter 2 of *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América*, a chapter, significantly enough, that is titled *Conocimiento* (Knowledge).[21] In chapter 12 Kusch moves from pensamiento indígena to pensamiento popular, and in this case he grounds his reflection not in lunfardo and "Buenos Aires bad life," but in the conversation of two criollos (from the provinces). One of them is a folklorist from Jujuy—that is, from the Inca Collasuyu coexisting with Argentina's Jujuy—and one is a farmer from Entre Ríos. That is, one is from the Andes, near Bolivia, and the other is from the northeastern lowlands, bordering with Uruguay, near the south of Brazil.

Thus, pensamiento popular is to be found geographically in a region that goes, metaphorically, from the frontier of the urban middle class (of Buenos Aires) to the frontier of the Aymaras and Quechuas Indians in Bolivia. Historically, this ethnically mixed population emerged and evolved at the margins of the colonial conquistadores; and at the margins of *unitarios* and *federales* (the two factions of the Argentine elite that took over the organization of Argentina after expelling the Spaniards) and that expanded—transformed by demographic and socioeconomic conditions—with peronismo.

As Kusch clearly stated in the second edition, his hopes emerged not as a sociopolitical *analysis* (study of the social science of Gino Germani, which Kusch relentlessly critiques), but as a dialogic scenario in which pensamiento popular and pensamiento culto (e.g., his own philosophical discourse) join forces. And both ways of thinking join forces in what Kusch identifies as the "method" of pensamiento popular: negation (*la negación*). The book Kusch published after *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América* is titled *La negación en el pensamiento popular* (1975).

NEGATION AND POPULAR THOUGHT

Kusch's early philosophical reflections on *estar* and *estar siendo* led him, right after finishing *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América*, to a long exploration of "negation" as a distinctive principle of popular thought. "Negation" doesn't yet occupy a prominent place in this book, but it is simmering in the last four chapters.

It is telling that the first chapter of *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América* is titled "El pensamiento americano," while the first chapter of *La negación en el pensamiento popular* is titled "El pensamiento popular." While the second edition of *Pensamiento indígena y pensamiento popular en América* was published the year that Juan Domingo Perón returned, *La negación en el pensamiento popular* was published one year after Perón's death. Thus, the first sentence of the prologue: "Vivimos en Argentina una crisis cultural y política, que no es de ahora, sino que recién se manifiesta. . . . Irrumpe una nueva, o mejor, una muy antigua verdad."[22]

The prologue is devoted to drive out the confusion between *doxa* and *pensamiento popular* and to reserve episteme to *pensamiento culto*, when that cultivated thought is practiced in the ex-colonial periphery (and it