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Extreme Apetites

The coloniality of seeing and archive-images on the cannibalism of the Indies

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In cartography, the cannibal islands appear and disappear. One of the disappearances of the islands, and a very noteworthy one indeed, occurred in the map Anglería made of the Antilles and of Tierra Firme *coast (1511). The reason for the omission, according to a hand written note on the reverse of the map was to "avoid confusion". It is probable that, by then, even Anglería himself believed in the geographical reality of the aforementioned islands.*
Carlos Jáuregui

There is a tribe, known as the ethnographic filmmakers who believe they are invisibles
Eliot Weinberger

Towards the middle of the 16th century, a transatlantic struggle

between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de Las Casas, laden with theological allegations and imperial diatribes, gave shape what is known as the *Valladolid Controversy*. In this city, in the convent of San Gregorio, the theological, moral, legal and labor rights of the indigenous of the *New World* where debated.[1] In 1552, and as a result of such epistemic confrontations concerning the 'natural inferiority' of the inhabitants of the *New World*, Las Casas produced a re-edited, synthetic and self-contained version of the brief history of the destruction of the Indies, which this friar had started writing around 1539. It was published in Seville under the title *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.

Along with the debate related to the existence (or non-existence) of the indigenous soul, the aforementioned controversy concerned what has been called, for some time now, the *tutelary paradigm,* that is to say, the theological-military right of intervention in the *New World* and the justification of the war against the Indians because of their supposed natural filiations with cannibalism. As Carlos Jáuregui has suggested, what soon became obvious following the political and economic failure of the *Leyes Nuevas* (promulgated in 1542)[2] was that the rhetoric concerning cannibalism and savagery rested on two deeply interwoven elements: on the association between the consumption of human flesh (attributed to those to whom the ambiguous denomination of *caribes* was applied to) and certain geographic latitudes, on one hand, and on the other, on the perpetual re-invention of indigenous slavery through a theological justification based on imperial cartography of the *Inter-Caetera* papal Bull of 1493 and it's tacit endorsement of another type of consumption: the consumption of the workforce and of precious metals by the *encomenderos*.[3] As Jáuregui puts it "The subject of cannibalism is less and less a question of the consumption of human flesh and more and more about the

consumption of the workforce by the *encomenderos* of the Greater Antilles".[4]

Hence the appetites we touch upon here constitute two extremes: 1) the satiable consumption of gold and of the indigenous workforce and 2) the insatiable consumption of cartographic otherness and ethnographic sameness. Like all extremes, the symbolic function of the discovered (or hidden) gold in the *land of the cannibals* and the ethnic and racial subjection of the productive workforce are two related appetites that merge within the *New World* geography of the *encomiendas* system. Following this logic, as we will see further ahead, these two extreme appetites survive with postfordist capitalism, within which they function as the ethno-hierarchical base of what Tony Miller has defined as the New International Division of Cultural Labour (NIDCL), that is to say, they function as the substratum for all intercultural undermining in the context of today's global labor migrations.

In this text we will examine the genealogy of a series of *archive-images*[5] on cannibalism and savagery in the context of the ethno or proto-ethnographic formulation derived from what is euphemistically called *the encounter of two worlds.* After an analysis of the visual cultures and the transatlantic mercantile economies of the 16th century, we will examine the updating processes these ethno-cartographic imaginaries undergo in the context of current decolonizing geopolitical relations. In other words, this text will interpret the ways these *archive-images* on cannibalism of the Indies work in the framework of the epistemological crisis of western expansionism that James Clifford has defined as "the postcolonial crisis of ethnographic authority".[6] The central hypothesis of this text hence consists in the affirmation that, to be able to proceed with any kind of critique, (and this is true not only regarding the

critique of the visual rhetoric and of the imperial iconographies associated to cannibalism in the Indies, but also of current migratory, economic, and symbolic exchange in the Euro-Latin American cultural region) it is first necessary to delineate clearly the correlations between the following elements: the birth of Eurocentered ethnographic knowledge, transatlantic expansionism of imperial visual cultures, cartographic-military ocularcentrism and the genesis of the modern-colonial mercantile system.

To establish this transmodern bridge between early modernity and the 21st century, I will first examine critically the processes of construction and transmission of what Iris Zavala defines as the *colonial panoptic gaze*.[7] In other words, I will approach the problem of the invention of the *New World* by taking the following as points of reference: the geo-epistemological aspect of the modern-colonial gaze, the visual rhetoric on cannibalism and the transatlantic symbolic economies that emerged in the 16th century. Subsequently, I will project these thoughts towards the field of current experimental ethnographies. To do this I will briefly describe the project of Ecuadorian artist Tomás Ochoa, called *Indios Medievales*. Through this case study I will advocate the necessity of conceiving certain contemporary art exhibits as experimental ethno-cartographic devices. *Indios Medievales* is, in this sense, a decolonial *tableau vivant* which carries a strong critique of Eurocentered imperial narratives. As we will see, Tomás Ochoa's project underscores, on the one hand, the postcolonial reformulations of those documents, archives and *images-archive* that shaped and keep shaping iconographic relations between Spain and the *New World*, and unmasks on the other, ethno-racial stereotypes produced by the Chroniclers of the Indies and reproduced by the current transatlantic modern-colonial visual culture.

The appetites that are discussed in this text therefore constitute the matrix of the coloniality of transatlantic transmodern visual economy, or, in other terms, are constitutive of what in this text we will describe as the *coloniality of seeing*. From our perspective, both should be digested, *stricto sensu*, through an analysis of reconstruction and updating processes of cannibalism and of savagery. Projecting the Lascasian rhetoric to the current situation, this text can be said to be *A Brief (Postcolonial) Account of the Symbolic Reconstruction of the Indies* which points to a decolonial comprehension of extreme visual appetites that coincide in the context of the economy and consumption of global transcultural imaginaries.

Canibalia, the *colonial panoptic gaze* **and the 'hunger for metals'**

> When I tried to find out where they got the gold, they all pointed to land that bordered theirs to the west (...) but all bid me not to go there because they ate men there, and I thus understood that they dais that they where cannibal men.
> Christopher Colombus (Third Voyage)

Regardless of the nuances brought forth by John H. Elliott in relation to the rates of exploitation of the indigenous workforce suggested by Bartolomé de Las Casas and to the portrayal of the population decrease referred to by Massimo Livi Bacci in such an early date as 1519, -the very same year in which the Dominican Order denounced the slave trade expeditions to Carlos V, defining

them as *carnycerías* (butcheries)-, it is fair to say that the apparition of the *New World* in the theological-commercial map was the catalyst through which the classical and medieval versions of savagery and cannibalism took on a new colonialist-mercantile-modern dimension.[8] Hence, in the middle of the theological diatribes sustained by Las Casas y Ginés de Sepúlveda –the last of which justified the war against the indigenous by stating that these where cannibals and therefore "didn't govern themselves by the laws of reason but by those of appetite"- there appeared a direct and paradoxical connection between the colonial appetite for the natural riches of the *New World* (hunger for metals) and the ethno-cartographic justification for slave consumption (the appetite for a kind of cannibalized indigenous otherness to be converted in productive potential). From this paradox, in turn, emerged the "two savage artifacts or conceptual forms of savagerism"[9] described by Eurocentric learned thinking: that is to say, the friendly and allied savage (who becomes an integrated part of the transatlantic colonial economy) and the enemy, inhuman and *caribe* savage, (which stays on the margins of commerce). As Rodrigo de Figueroa will make clear in 1520 in his judgment on who should and who shouldn't be described as cannibals, the matter of anthropophagy was interpreted from the perspective of the Eurocentered gaze of the *encomenderos* in a geo-culturally strategic manner: ritualized in the case of allied Indians (as where once considered the Tupinambás), dehumanized in the case of enemy Indians (like the Ouetaca). In his travel log of his voyages through the Brazilian land, Jean de Lèry states in this respect that "these malevolent Ouetaca remain invincible in their own small region, and furthermore, like dogs and wolves, eat raw meat (...) also, as they have nor want any dealings or commerce with the French, Spanish, Portuguese or with anyone from our side of the ocean, they know nothing of our merchandises."[10]

The transatlantic exploitation of the indigenous workforce, the mercantilization of cannibal otherness, internal colonialism, the medievalist epic of *El Dorado,* the imperial paternalistic adoption of the new 'tierras firmes' and the continental penetration into a place ethno-cartographically defined as *Canibalia* where therefore the ingredients through which the western myth of the 'good savage' was embodied, and the logic of the *encomiendas* system of the 'bad savage' was territorialized. In other words, the logic that distinguishes between converted Indians and *tainos* (which collaborate with the crown's imperial market) and the cruel, violent and indomitable Indians that reject the metropolitan protection, the imperial Eucharist and the *tutelary paradigm* of the Christian religion. As we will soon see, more emerged from the transatlantic commercial battles of the 16th century than the symbolic and epistemic struggles regarding colonial-mercantile-cannibalism in the *New World*. It also engendered one of its more potent visual devices: the colonial-imperial cartography of cannibal otherness.

The coloniality of seeing: *The apparition of cannibal territory and the disappearance of the observer-subject*

Modeled by the missionaries' demonological visions, by the accounts of the conquistadores, by the travel logs of the Chroniclers of the Indies, by the *encomendero*'s legal argumentation related to territorial matters and by the rhetoric of cartographic imperialism, from within the *colonial panoptic gaze,* to which we have referred to before, appeared what can be described -following Anibal Quijano- as the *coloniality of seeing*.[11] It is through this *coloniality* of the gaze that both the ethnographic mould of transatlantic commerce as well as the imperial substrate of expansionist cartography where articulated. It was therefore

through a Eurocentric and universalizing visual regime that the *caribes* lands went from being perceived as unknown and distant territory (where lay the mineral riches of the *New World*) to become, metonymically speaking, a known, mapped, accessible and tame territory. The *caribes* lands were conceived as the natural geography of cannibalism. To describe the *New World*, as Luis Pancorbo has indicated, the *encomenderos* used in repeated instances the ambiguous name of *Caribana*.[12] The imperial-cartographic rhetoric and the *coloniality of seeing* hence allowed the symbolic weight of cannibalism (attributed to some of the *caribes* inhabitants of the Lower Antilles) to be projected metonymically on the bulk of the cartography of the *New World*, so as to allow for a justification, wherever it was deemed necessary, of the slave trade expeditions on *Tierra Firme*. In this manner, even though it was widely known that the phenomenon of cannibalism was limited to certain areas, groups and cultural circumstances, the matrix of coloniality of the Eurocentered gaze allowed for a consideration of all the *New World* as a territory occupied by cannibal natives, and therefore, to be defined as an ontologically cannibal territory.

One of the geo-epistemological regimes where it is easiest to observe the emergence of the *coloniality of seeing* is the one that concerns the redistribution between an ontological 'outside' and an ethnological 'inside' pertaining to imperial cartographies. Since the 'discovery' of the *New World* the latter couldn't remain a geographical 'outside', the *Caribana* region was redefined from then onwards as a new ontological 'outside', that is, as an ethno-cartographic *beyond*. Hence, the split between the 'outside' and the 'inside' ceased being a mere physical and geographical division between the known territory and unknown worlds and it became a material, theological and ontological disciplinary strategy of the cannibalism of the Indies. On another hand, as we have emphasized

before, the new symbolic geography of *New World* anthropophagic otherness remains incomprehensible if we do not take onto account both the new geography of transatlantic slave trading and the reinvention of medieval justifications related to the exploitation of the indigenous workforce and the consumption of precious metals. The absolute and universal 'outside' was therefore substituted by an 'outside' defined visually by the colonial territorialization of cannibalism. It was then the construction if this ethno-cartographic 'outside' as well as it's symbolical and visual capacity for a territorialization of cannibalism, which guaranteed the consolidation and the continuity of geographic and ontological exploitation of the *New World* promoted by the *Inter-caetera* Bull of 1493. The imperial cartographies, Eurocentered proto-ethnographies and transatlantic mercantilization of cannibal otherness are then all constitutive of the *coloniality of seeing*.

The *colonial panoptical gaze* functioned as a substrate for the design of the imperial maps of the *New World*, and was the theological-argumentative foundation upon which the *kanibaloi* anthropophagy -constructed by the European medieval imaginary- would be allowed to embody the ethno-cartographic image of the anthropophagic *caribe*. As we will see further ahead, all the mythological past on savagery and all the medievalist traditional rhetoric on cannibalism where reused in the construction of the 'good' and of the 'bad' savages of the Indies; this explains why it is possible in all propriety to define them as *Medieval Indians*. The *archive-images* of the savage of the Indies hence plunges its roots in the late medievalist reinvention of Greco-Roman anthropophagy, in the social representation of the *Naturmenschen* and in cannibal imaginaries that derived from the ontological problem of the Christian Eucharist, in other words, from the metaphorical

justification and the ecumenical and symbolic function of eating the *body* of Christ.

A veritable process of territorialization of the cannibal nature of the indigenous of the *New World* had thus been initiated. This *monstrous territorialization* allowed for a 'spontaneous ethnography' (Miampika) or a 'proto-ethnographic' knowledge (Carlos Jáuregui) to emerge alongside the new commercial transatlantic imaginaries. They promoted a kind of epistemic violence, which substantially differs from any other form of racial discrimination. The epistemic matrix of *the coloniality of seeing* no longer consists solely in a civilizing and hierarchical racialization of the indigenous or in his definition as an apolitical being or excluded from divine and earthly laws. It consists in the combination of an ontological negation of indigenous humanity with the *corpo-political* and *geo-identitary* production of the *archive-image* of the cannibal. That is to say, it consists in the production of the 'cartographic evidence' that the body and the presence of the cannibal Indians belong to the known world, to the expanded western 'inside', while it simultaneously generates the 'ethnographic evidence' that his/her ontological existence is located in an absolute and irreversible outside: in a racial *beyond* that cannot be eliminated or diluted by the civilizing process.

The profound interaction this matrix of *coloniality of seeing* entertains with the emergence of these early manifestations of ethnographic knowledge is thus at the foundation of the construction of an extreme otherness or, rather, of a *beyond* of otherness: a *radical epistemic racialization*. This radicalization consists in transcending the dehumanization and 'animalization' of cannibal otherness to take it to a state of maximum racial and epistemic inferiority, in which not only is there no 'humanity', or 'animality' of the cannibal, but in which there is no possibility of a

corpo-geographical redemption of the ontological monstrosity of the 'bad savages' of the *New World*. Once such a monstrosity has indeed been embodied, 'made visible' and, above all, that its being has been defined in an ontological *beyond*, it becomes a *plus ultra* racial device for the perception of the cannibalism of the Indies and of all overseas anthropophagy. This explains the rhetorical and narrative power of the ethnographic accounts of *New World* cannibalism by authors like Montaigne or Lèry.

It is indeed true that it wasn't until the 18th century that anthropology became legitimate as a discipline and in its social and epistemic-function. However, this doesn't negate the fact that it was within a proto-ethnographic perspective that the idea of "ethnographic distance" (the idea of discovering otherness and making sameness disappear in the preformative event of the transcultural gaze) fermented.[13] Moreover, in the case of this imperial colonialist proto-ethnographic visuality, it is worth noting that the question of visual distance and objectivity springs from a sort of cannibalistic double bind: the objective consumption of the *observed-subject* and the subjective self-cannibalization of the ethnocentered gaze. In other words, the colonial visual regime of cannibalism of the Indies consists in the interplay of embodiment of otherness and sublimation of selfness. The power of this type of epistemic violence inserted in the *coloniality of seeing* therefore lies in a doubled up visual strategy from which all ocularcentric colonial-modernity originates: in making the *savage object* appear, while making oneself disappear as the *observer-subject*. Montaigne is himself explicit about this when he declares the following in regards to his essays on cannibals: " I myself am the content of my book". "Montaigne's gaze regarding what he learned about American cannibalism- says Jáuregui- is oblique, a pretence gaze towards otherness for the critical encounter with sameness".[14]

Between the material culture of the *New World* (seen as a geographical expression and cartographic embodiment of the cannibalism) and the Europeanizing visual rhetoric (perceived as iconographic discourses on the biblical 'golden age' which where recuperated in the 16th century) a new epistemological relation was established. The cartographic apparition of the *New World* thus corresponds with a new territorialization of otherness, all the while allowing for the deterritorialization of the locus of observation and of enunciation of ethnographic knowledge. The material monstrosity of the cannibal's naked body is symmetrical to the disembodiment (or conceptual dematerialization) of the beholding subject and to the supposed transparency of the gaze. In his study on the Brazilian indigenous in the work of Montaigne, Carlo Ginzburg opened many paths for an understanding of how modernity updated a tradition from the renaissance which corresponds, on the one hand, to a *naked* way of seeing devoid of any artifice -explicitly objective and unaffected- and to an idyllic and rhetorical formulation of the natural, rustic, and simple man that does without the artifice of clothing on the other.[15] The epistemic nudity of the proto-ethnographic colonial gaze would find rhetorical correspondence in the idealization of the naked and wild 'good savage' of the *New World*. As Denis Cosgrove has demonstrated in his book *Apollo's Eye*, this imperial ethnographic strategy of disembodiment of the gaze functioned as a foundation for a Eurocentric, universalizing and patriarchal apollonian visual regime which allowed the cartographic rhetoric of the *theater-Atlases* of the 16th century to transpose the omniscient divine medieval gaze to the sublunary world in which the transatlantic and commercial expansions took place.

The 'I' that conquers, that is, the *ego conquiro* constitutes –in a wide sense of the expression- the optical unconscious of colonial

modernity inaugurated by the commercial transatlantic battles of the 16th century. The anthropocentric technologies of vision are set up in the luminic matrix and that of the *coloniality of knowledge*, or, in other words, in the shedding of light (knowledge) on the darkness of the unknown, and in the hiding not merely the *observer-subject*, but the place where beholds from and enunciates knowledge from as well. This is what Santiago Castro-Gómez has called the 'hybris of point zero': the epistemic *non-lieu,* the endemic technology of the coloniality of ocular knowledge.[16] In this way, the *New World* is *new* in as much as its appearance in the tripartite order of the theological western map fostered the apparition of a new scopic regime: the *coloniality of seeing*. The cartography, the ethnographic account, the 'archives of the Indies', and the technologies of ocular knowledge where summoned to take on a specific role in the new geopolitics of seeing inaugurated by the 'cultures of discovery'.[17]

The ethnographic 'double disappearance' inscribed in the coloniality of seeing to which we have referred to before has multiple resonances in the theoretical approaches on cannibalism such as the ones elaborated by Geoffrey Symcox, Peter Hulme, Roger Bartra, Iris Zavala, Michael Palencia Roth, William Arens, Sara Castro-Klarén, Frank Lestringant y Maggie Kilgour, among others. From diverse perspectives, and not all of them harmonize with *decolonizing thinking*, each one has contributed to the understanding of the regime coloniality of transcultural visuality as a doubly anthropophagic system. The anthropophagic 'double disappearance' is completed with the conspicuous 'invisibility' of the *observer-subject* (of the one who scrutinizes and broods over the unknown and savagery), on the one hand, and on the other, with the ontological and consumable invisibilization (radical ethnographic dehumanization) of *the cannibal*, i.e. of that ominous

and abject presence of the 'bad savage' that should only be made visible as a form of negation of his own existence. Faced with this double regime of the unnoticed, we can say that both the 'discovery' of the *New World* and the invention of its inherent monstrosity correspond symmetrically with the birth of new transatlantic visual economy on one hand and with a fully capitalist ethnocentric
and a wholly cannibalistic visual culture on the other.

The transmodern character of the coloniality of seeing

It is due to this double cannibalistic matrix that the *coloniality of seeing* can be defined as transmodern. The *coloniality of seeing* is thus constitutive of modernity and is also constitutive of what we have formerly described as the "postcolonial crisis of the ethnographic authority", that is to say, of the racial-hierarchical regime implicit in any coloniality of the gaze. In consequence, the *coloniality of seeing* is impossible to dissociate from current geopolitical tensions and cultural-economic debts of the Euro-Latin American region, or, in other words, from the bi-regional consequences of transatlantic cultural capitalism in the context of the global economy. It is as if we were dealing with an ontological spiral; those anthropophagic forms of seeing and digesting otherness that appeared in the 16th century remain undaunted in our economical global imaginaries, in current rhetoric on geopolitical interdependency and in commercial and patrimonial negotiations of the 'postcolonial era': by this I mean that they coexist, updated, in the Euro-Latin American bi-regional cultural economy of our time. The dialectic between the *observer-subject* and *that, which is subjected* by his gaze or on the map, is therefore consubstantial to with all anthropocentric modern scopic regimes and to all

mutations of the *coloniality of seeing*. The current maps of the migrations of the workforce are, in this sense, a recipient of the adaptations and technologies of *the coloniality of seeing* that permeate the *archive-images* on cannibalism. These *archive-images* have roamed about the space of colonial *différence* of western modernity adapting themselves to the new geopolitical necessities of postcolonial cultural consumption. A good example of the processes of epistemological adaptation of the colonial scopic regime of cannibalism are the Universal Exhibitions -like the *Exposição Antropológica Brasileira* de 1882- which where structured upon the explicit foundations of an *exclusão inclusiva* (*exclusive inclusion*) of the 'bad savage'.[18]

The luminic epistemologies on savagery and cannibalism that emerged in the context of the commercial transatlantic battles of the 16th century thus made it through the end of the *encomiendas* power, internal colonialism, the borbonic reforms implemented through the *intendencias*, the usurpation of the metropolitan administrative power by the *criollos*,[19] and through state nationalisms and the theories of dependency. This is why we still encounter them in the context of global labor migrations, in the discourses of multicultural liberalism, in the visual rhetoric of cooperation programs with developing countries an in the promotion of sustainable tourism in Third World countries. Between the disappearance of the cannibal islands in the fictional cartographies of Pedro Mártir de Anglería and current ethnographic tours organized by tourism agencies through the interiors of the remnants of the Amazonian savage world, it can thus be said -all proportions being kept in relation to each historical contexts- that a certain continuity based on this double visual and epistemological disappearance to which we referred to before prevails. The modern-colonial world system has given way

to a permanent reinvention of a luminic regime that, on one hand, cyclically constructs and devours the other, and searches and hides the sameness of the *observer-subject* on the other. In this way, the ethnographic mould of the panoptical gaze has stopped being colonial without ceasing to take a part in the coloniality of power of the Eurocentered gaze.[20] This explains the political and epistemological strength of the distinction that Aníbal Quijano y Walter Mignolo established between colonial regime, colonialism and coloniality.

The postcolonial crisis of ethnographic authority and the critiques to ocularcentrism

The interdisciplinary project known as Visual Studies is deeply engaged in both the perpetuation and the academic questioning of ethnographic luminic epistemologies. Independently from the internal struggles, what interests us now are those Visual Studies which have known how to re-absorb and re-direct the critiques of postcoloniality formulated above all by the theories of black and chicana postfeminists, by theories on postoccidentalism and by the so called *decolonial turns* and *border thinking*. Immersed in the critique of the politics of representation, these transcultural epistemologies of visuality have known how to confront the problem of double ethnographic disappearance of the *observer-subject* and of the subject that is visually digested (consumed). Through the analysis of the performative, linguistic and semiotic matrix of transmodern visual rhetoric, these Visual Studies have achieved a certain decoding of the Malinowskian "staging" thus giving shape to a type of epistemic self-reflexivity that is strategically antiocularcentric.

On considering these interdisciplinary knowledge, put forth by the transcultural studies of visuality, it becomes obvious that the diverse ethnocentric and ethnophagic regimes of the *coloniality of seeing* –not only those related to the visual narrations of Chroniclers of the Indies like Pedro Mártir de Anglería, to the travel logs like those of Teodoro De Bry, André Thevet or Jean de Lèry, and to Eurocentered essayists like Montaigne himself, but also those other narratives and imaginaries that have appeared in the mist of late capitalist modernity- can and must be analyzed and contested. Moreover, they need to be included in what Ramon Grosfoguel defines as the *inter-epistemic dialog*. In this sense it can be asserted that the fact that the processes of anthropologization and digestion of otherness are both transmodern and constitutively modern-colonial doesn't mean that they lack vanishing points or epistemic fissures through which an anti-luminic critique of these can be formulated. However, to carry out a decolonial critique of the colonial panoptic imaginaries it is necessary to remember that anthropological knowledge –because it is in debt with the scopic regimes of modernity- is a knowledge that is reiteratively ocularcentric and that the ethnographic method of beholding and observing (associated to Malinowskian 'staging') tends to function like a surveillance device, and a normativization of the gaze and of the *observed-subject*.

To be proposed as veritable decolonial strategies, the transcultural visual studies therefore need to go beyond the mere affirmation that both the historical development of colonial visuality and its imperial ethnographies like the process of disciplinary legitimization of visual anthropological thought –in as much as all where born with the presumption of being universal knowledge and universalizing disciplines- are strongly related to the imperial luminic paradigms that have characterized the scopic regime of

colonial modernity.[21] The former is without a doubt a key element to understand the genealogy of the *coloniality of seeing*. However, from our point of view, it is also necessary to recognize that the submission or *subjectivation* of otherness did not constitute, nor does it constitute it now- a unique visual regimen, an that for this reason, such narratives and imperial categories are displaceable, permeable, and questionable. The luminic epistemologies that underlie all observation, disappearance, or ethnographic digestion therefore need to be contested and confronted, whether this is done from the logic of anti-luminic decolonial epistemologies or from antiocularcentric self-reflexivity of *inter-epistemic dialog* itself. The visual studies are, in this sense, urged to reveal those anti-luminic forms that went unnoticed by the traditional social sciences but that are consubstantial to western ocularcentric historicity and to all ethnocentric knowledge. The question that is currently formulated by transculturality to the visual studies seems to be the following one: could we cease to use the legitimate suspicion related to the *coloniality of knowledge* of the ethnographic gaze to deny the possibility of implementing now an *inter-epistemic dialog* between Eurocentered cultures and visual cultures that where racially undermined through the modern-colonial technologies of seeing. In this sense, the recognition of the *coloniality of seeing* should rather conduce us towards the 'discovery' of alternative and non-conformist adjacent scopic paradigms implicit in the historic development of colonial modernity.

Taking into account both the perspective inaugurated by the transatlantic commercial routes as well as the new global designs of the coloniality of the gaze makes us conscious of the necessity of brooding more deeply into the dark areas of the luminic anthropologies, in its non-conformist regimes and in its strategies

to shed a light on ethnographic power of visuality. It is also necessary to do it outside of the gravitational pull of the postcolonial paradigm, which seems to suggest that the overcoming of anthropological ocularcentrism is achieved through an eye that is transculturally innocent. From this point of view, the idea according to which all ethnographic observation always become irremediably malevolent, exoticizing, and ocularcentric gaze, has to be confronted with experimental forms of poststructuralist anthropological knowledge as well as with counter-cartographies and proto-ethnographic demands made to the world/modern/colonial system. The case of the cartographic de-ethnitization and visual decolonization elaborated by Felipe Guaman Poma De Ayala in his *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno,* are a good example of the latter; while Rolena Adorno and John V. Murra' s investigations on the more than 400 images included in Poma de Ayala' s book would be a good example of the former.

To finish I would like to describe the manner in which the project *Indios Medievales* articulates a critique of the updating processes of *archive-images* on cannibalism and savagery. In this final part I will make a brief description in which the transatlantic imaginaries on cannibalism will be interwoven with current cultural appetites now understood not only as 'the hunger for metal' but also as the exploitation of the flexible work force and the accumulation of intangible capital.

Brief (Postcolonial) Account of the Symbolic Reconstruction of the Indies

An experimental ethnography based on Tomas Ochoa's Indios Medievales

> There are unbroken threads that link the idea of the monstrous in the accounts of medieval voyages and in the chronicles. As the former presented symbolically the encounter between a civilized Europe and an Other savage, this same confrontation appeared in the presentation of the indigenous monster. The system of analogies linked the newly discovered with the erroneous, which justified the discourse of the monstrous in the behavior of the indigenous.
> Borja Gómez, *Los Indios Medievales de Fray Pedro de Aguado*

> I'd like to be a cannibal to eat my enemies
> Tomás Ochoa

The apparition of the *New World* and the 'invention' of America are two ideas that are founded on the visual and literary rhetoric that the Chroniclers of the Indies and the imperial travelers inherited from the medieval literary corpus. In the same way, the construction of the American savage developed through the updating of diverse medieval imaginaries related to cannibalism, of argumentative strategies and the use of the discursive *exemplum* and of the *inventio as* rhetorical forms plagued with historiographic and hagiographic codes. As Borja Gómez tried to demonstrate in his book on the missionary expeditions of Fray Pedro de Aguado in the *Nuevo Reino de Granada*, the American Indians "are medieval because all their narrative subtext is; they are put together from the perspective of the Christian tradition, through literary thinking and the weight of the authorities as generators of reality [...] Aguado used medieval exegetical theory, the biblical system of

types and anti-types as well as poetics, in such a way that he was able, through another rhetorical element which has its own long tradition in medieval literature, the *exempla*, to present history as a field where virtues and vices battled".[22] The birth of the monstrous trait of the western *beyond* and of its extreme otherness —the indomitable *caribe* that doesn't participate in the transatlantic game of the commerce of precious metals, is therefore strongly linked with the use of rhetoric in the fictional literature of the chroniclers of the Indies. It can thus be said that the invention of the 'good' and the 'bad' American savage is anchored in medieval tropology, and that as a consequence, the new cannibal inaugurated by the modern-colonial world is first and foremost a parable.

However, it is on this historical rhetorical immateriality that the racializing potential of the colonial panoptic gaze rests. As a result, the matrix of coloniality of the aforementioned rhetoric on cannibalism is so resilient, that is has been able to adapt and update itself by a process of settling as sedimentation in the western *archive-images* on cannibalism. As Antonello Gerby's investigations on 'the dispute of the *New World*' have made clear, these narratives have all but weakened, having been updated by erudite, and positivist historiographies. In the context of current migratory exchanges and global labor, the *archive-images* engendered by rhetorical and proto-ethnographic invention of colonial cannibalism of the *caribe* territory seem to have acquired a new symbolic strength, so that the invention of the *Indian*, of the *Other* and of the different –as colonial categories- now feed the iconographic substrate of imaginaries shared by Europe, Latin-America and the Caribbean. The 'Chronicles of the Indies' operate, from this point of view, as Europeanizing transhistoric and transmodern accounts at the service of a contemporary transatlantic visual economy.

Tomás Ochoa´s project *Indios Medievales* focuses on the deconstruction of these continuities: that is to say, on the unmasking of genealogies from which layer upon layer of sediments have been settling to give shape to the current *archive-images* of Latin American cultural cannibalism. In this project by the Ecuadorian artist, the faces and biographies of the workers who migrated in the 21st century from Latin America towards Spain function as something more than mere contemporary stereotypes of the American savage. Their role consists in bringing the matrix of coloniality implicit in the vast majority of the American indigenous representations to the surface, that is, in showing the sedimentation process of all *archive-images* on indigenous cannibalism and in revealing the fact that under these layers there are no essential prototypes of the cannibal of the Indies -a pure iconographic trace of the American Savage- but rather an ethnographic doubling up of the European panoptical colonial gaze.

Structured by the confrontation of two series of photographies printed on metal, the *Indios Medievales* project situates two iconographic genealogies differentiated by their printing processes, but identified by their placement in one rhetorical-visual matrix. On one side we find reproductions of some of Theodore De Bry's engravings made using a photographic technique on silver metal plates that emulates the *bas-relief* of Theodore De Bry's original woodcuts by using an emulsion and an acid that works away at the uncovered parts of the metal plate, that is, corroding certain parts of the surface. On the other side we find a series of gold color impressions, also on metal, in which two sub-layers of the *archive-images* on cannibalism confront one another. In this second series, on the left side of the composition, we see *prototypes* of the 'bad savage' known for their rebellious behavior against the imperial

metropolitan crown as well as against the *criollo's* empowerment (like Túpac Amaru, Cuauthémoc, Rumiñahui, Bartolina Sisa, etc.). On the right side, we find stereotypes of contemporary 'good savages'. In this case we are dealing with Latin American immigrants that are apparently well 'integrated' to the Spanish labor market. This second golden series, unlike the first one, was produced as *blind embossing* also on metal plates but using a technique that leaves the surface intact. Both genealogies -in clear resonance with the interaction of the transatlantic battles between silver (the concrete object of slave exploitation slaves in America) and gold (the symbolic object on which the justification of the conquest and expansion of cannibal territory was based)- hence establish a contrast between flip sides, between surface and depth, hunger for precious metals and extreme appetites for the iconographic consumption of cannibal otherness, and, finally, between the positive (the good) and the negative (the bad) in the representational processes of savagery. Through such a juxtaposition, the artist makes the search for the contradiction between the ethnographic distance and the technologies of the colonial panoptical gaze as metaphors for a transparent and innocent perception. The strategy of 'being present' as an ocular witness without 'being' part of cannibal otherness by the grace of a kind of ethnographic distance (a characteristic ambivalence of De Bry's etchings which are supposedly *literal* translations of Hans Staden accounts on the Tupinambás) is unmasked in the confrontation of the two iconographic genealogies scrutinized by Tomás Ochoa.

The staging of the *coloniality of seeing* becomes evident in the animation of one of De Bry's engravings, where the indigenous quench the Spanish greed giving a captive conquistador liquid gold to drink. This recreation in which the 'monstrous Indians' are

replaced by current immigrant laborers, offers a true *tableau vivant* in which the transatlantic colonial visual culture, current Euro-Latin American imaginaries and the urgency of figuring out, in all their *corpo-political* dimension, new forms of representation of those subjects that postcolonial theories defined as 'subaltern'. *Indios Medievales* therefore functions as a decolonial device through which are brought afloat the rhetorical and performative weight of those documents and *archive-images* which shape visual economy of the *New World* and the geopolitics of labor of the Euro-Latin American cultural territory.

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[1] We use the concept *New World (Novis Orbis)* in italics to denounce not only the Eurocentric genealogy of the 'idea of the discovery of America' (in accordance with the re-historization of such a concept after the publication of Edmundo O'gorman's book *La invención de América*, 1958) but also to focus on the interactions between the cartographic rhetoric and transatlantic/colonial visual culture. As Eviatar Zerubavel has said, "America is both a physical and a mental entity; any history of its "discovery" should therefore be the history of its physical and cognitive discovery"; see Zerubavel, *Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America,* New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2003, pp. 35.

[2] It can be said very briefly that the *Nuevas Leyes* where meant to limit the power of the *encomenderos* by way of a rationalization of slavery in the *New World*.

[3] The *encomiendas* system was used by the Spanish crown in all its American colonies as well as in the Philippines. It consisted in a sort of distribution of the indigenous workforce of a determined territory and under the administration and the control of the

conquistadores or their heirs, to whom the title of *encomenderos* was given. The *encomiendas* where first conceived to regulate and protect the land under the jurisdiction and protection of the Spanish crown. The *encomendero* had the obligation to protect the indigenous, to catechize them and to guarantee their general wellbeing. They where also called upon to defend the territory they where entrusted with. In reality, the *encomiendas* paved the way for all sorts of abuses and nepotism because of the abusive treatment of the indigenous workforce

[4] Jáuregui, *Canibalia. Canibalismo, calinbalismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina*, Madrid, Vervuert, 2008, p. 79.

[5] We use the concept of *archive-image* to accentuate the condensing and catalytic capacity of certain images; that is to say, to emphasize their semiotic function and their porosity as depositaries of other images and representations. These *archive-images* take shape through the layering, one top of the other, of multiple representations. From this sedimentation process a certain hermeneutic integrity is reached as well as an iconic unity. Those representations that harbor a certain degree of association or familiarity with the *archive-image* of Che Guevara, for example, would be immediately be registered within the thick layering of the visual culture generated by that extremely famous photography titled *Guerrillero heróico* taken by Korda, and would in turn be indebted with a series of cultural imaginaries such as the myth of the Latin-American rebel, the idea of a patriotic and nationalistic Bolivarian vehemence, the idea of a purity of an ideological and revolutionary essence in the Third World, the idea of a social utopia triggered by the disobedience of certain subordinate groups, the idea of historical failure of peripheral modernities, etc. *Archive-*

images can be defined as semiotic-social tools for the creation of inter-connectedness, that is, as tools that trigger multiple underlying imaginaries or complementary iconicities. Their usefulness for the study of diverse global visual cultures lies in the fact that through their analysis we can reflect upon the interdisciplinary construction of a sort of transmodern archaeology of what is described in this text as the *coloniality of seeing*.

[6] Clifford, *Dilemas de la cultura*, Barcelona, Gedisa, 1995, p. 23.

[7] Zavala (ed.), *Discursos sobre la 'invención' de América*, Amsterdam, Rodolpi, 1992.

[8] Elliot, "Renaissance, Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?" in: Fredi Ciapelli (ed.) *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, Berkeley, University of California, UP, 1976, pp. 11-23; *cfr.* Levi, *Los estragos de la conquista: quebranto y declive de los indios de América,* Barcelona, Crítica, 2006.

[9] *Ibidem* p. 30.

[10] Quoted in: Jáuregui, "Brasil especular: alianzas estratégicas y viajes estacionarios por el tiempo salvaje de la canibalia" in Jáuregui, Dabove (Eds.), *Heterotopías: Narrtivas de identidad y alteridad latnoamericana*, IILI, 2003, p.92.

[11] Quijano had talked about the *coloniality of power*; subsequently, the debates of the 'decolonial group' have expanded this concept and talked of the *coloniality of knowledge* and the *coloniality of being*; as I have tried to specify in other texts, *coloniality of seeing* would establish specific counterpoint between the other three levels: the epistemological (knowledge), the ontological (being) and the corpo-cratic (or, as Ramon Grosfoguel has called it, the *corpo-political)*. Such a counterpoint would open,

in the aforementioned interpretation, an analytical perspective on ocularcentrism implicit in the western modern-colonial gaze. On this matter, see Barriendos, "La Colonialidad del Ver: Contrapunteo
Epistémico, Ocularcentrismo y Transculturalidad" in *Cuadernos de debate*, Barcelona, VCGD, 2008; On the expansion of Quijano's concept, see Castro-Gómez, Ramón Grosfoguel (eds), *El giro decolonial. Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Instituto Pensar; Siglo del Hombre Editores; IESCO, Bogotá, 2007.

[12] Pancorbo, *El Banquete Humano. Una historia Cultural del Canibalismo*, Madrid, Siglo XXI Editores, 2008.

[13] Many theorists are opposed –in the majority of the cases because they subscribe to a an Eurocentric reading of history of social sciences– to the idea that early inter-subjective relationships and colonial geo-identity rhetoric between the *New World* and the old one, be defined as 'proto-ethnographies', as 'early anthropologies', as 'spontaneous ethnographies' or as 'ethnological otherness'. However, as the historian Carlo Ginzburg has suggested in his article on the influence of spatial and temporal collectionism (expansionism) on the Montainge's ethnographic conception of the cannibal indigenous, this is a transdisciplinary terrain that has yet to be explored; see Ginzburg, *Il filo e le trace. Vero, Falso, Finito,* Feltrinelli, Milan, 2006; see also Todorov, *The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other,* Oklahoma, Oklahoma University Perss, 2009.

[14] Jáuregui, "Brasil especular: alianzas estratégicas y "viajes estacionarios" por el tiempo salvaje de la Canibalia" in *Heterotopías: narratives de identidad y alteridad latinoamericana*, IILI (2003): pp. 100.

[15] Ginzburg, *op. cit.*

[16] Castro-Gómez, (2004) *La hybris del punto zero: ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750-1816).* Bogota; Universidad Javeriana-Instituto Pensar.

[17] The expression was coined by Hommi Bhabha: see *Nation and Narration*, London, Routledge, 1990; see also Donattini, *Spazio e modernitá. Libri, carte, isolari nell' etâ delle scoperte*, Bologna, CLUEB, 2000.

[18] González-Stephan, Jens Andermann (2006) *Galerías del Progreso. Museos, exposiciones y cultura visual en América Latina*, Buenos Aires: Beatriz Viterbo Editora.

[19] The descendants of the Spanish born in American territory where called originally *criollos,* as where in turn the descendants these, born, like their progenitors, on American territory.

[20] Mignolo has declared with absolute clarity that what is colonial and coloniality aren't nor have ever been the same; in this distinction lies part of the epistemic power of the *decolonial turn* to which Mignolo himself has referred to; see. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thinking,* Princeton University Press, 2000.

[21] Guiliano Gliozzi, "Adamo e il nuovo mondo: la nascita dell' antropologia come ideologia coloniale, dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali (1500-1700)" in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 3 (June, 1978), pp. 709-710.

[22] Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez, *Los Indios Medievales de Jaun Pedro Aguado. Construcción del idólatra y escritura de la historia en una crónica del siglo XVI,* Bogota, Universida Javeriana, 2002.