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**Globalization, Imagination, Social Space:
The Making of Geopolitical Imaginaries**

Abstract:

This article conceptualizes the term "geopolitical imaginaries" by offering a critical reading of the description of globalization processes based on theoretical considerations formulated by Arjun Appadurai and a brief case study in form of a comparison between two book covers. Appadurai's understanding of imagination is based on three elements: images, the imagined, and the imaginary. On an analytical level these terms hint at three important dimensions which are crucial for the understanding of geopolitical imaginaries: the material, the creative, and the social. The article highlights the impact of geopolitical imaginaries by comparing the different book covers of the English and the Spanish version of Christopher Baily's *The Birth of the Modern World* (*El nacimiento del mundo moderno*). Both book covers outline a specific geopolitical imaginary which implies the connection between different world regions and historical epochs and builds on the intersection of racial, gendered, and other asymmetrical power relations**.**

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Introduction

The current experience of globalization processes appears to be closely linked to the emergence and stabilization of particular spatial configurations that define both the extension and the inherent limits of contemporary global dynamics. These spatial configurations - such as the Americas, Europe, El Cono Sur, the Global South, or the West – represent not only concrete geographical or topographical places, localities or regions; they also refer to large-scale topological entities, systems and relations as they mark the intersection points of multiple historical developments, overlapping processes of integration, and competing economic, political, social, or cultural networks that operate on a translocal level and are firmly embedded within global power structures. Thus, the articulations of social space obtain an eminently geopolitical dimension, which can be set in relation to the diverging descriptive models of the global world that have been recently developed within scientific and literary discourses [1]: On the one hand, these discourses tend to focus on the constitution of a world community that is generated and sustained by the efficiency and connectivity of technological networks of transport and communication. These discourses appear to play down social differences and contribute to the formation of a homogeneous, universal, and "deterritorialized" human culture marked by the ability to temporarily overcome boundaries of both spacel and time. On the other hand, the world is conceived as a 'reterritorialized' spatial order based on multiple political practices of exclusion and inclusion that create asymmetrical power relations and rely on territorial borders that frequently guarantee and regulate the interactions between global centers and local peripheries. It is broadly accepted now that both processes – deterritorialization and reterritorialization – are inseparably interwoven (Giddens 64, cf. Robertson). This dual face of globalizing processes makes it difficult to conceive of or perceive geographical as well as political entities as fixed container items with clear cut borderlines. Consequently, it becomes obvious that these processes differ markedly with respect to varying and entangled localities. This situation motivates the use of the term 'globalizations' as opposed to 'globalization' (Epple). It is within this set of multi-layered mutual dependencies that recent research in sociology, politics, and anthropology, as well as in literary and cultural studies, has increasingly underscored the importance of image production. As we will see in the following pages, the role of the social imagination with respect to the globalizing processes of re- and deterritorialization, as well as the construction, organization, and distribution of geopolitical spaces has become even more important. Viewed from this perspective, the present world is characterized by the creation of highly varying geopolitical imaginaries produced to describe and sort out the world. In current research then "geopolitical imaginaries" represent both an important analytical concept and the object of ongoing empirical investigation.

Referring to the central features of geopolitical configurations of space, their persistent oscillation between 'deterritorializing' and 'reterritorializing' dynamics of spatial orders, as well as their interrelation with the imagination and varying forms of image production or reception, the following observations attempt to formulate an analytical (re)conceptualization of geopolitical imaginaries. This reconstruction will begin with a critical reading of the description of globalization processes based on the spatial notion of "scapes", first proposed by the Indian ethnologist Arjun Apppadurai (1996) in his study *Modernity at Large*. The reading will focus in particular on the intricate interplay of three different dimensions of "imagination": the material, the creative, and the social aspects. We systematically examine the close relationship between Appadurai's somewhat allusive account of the imagination and previous sociological descriptions of modernity. We also ask whether there is a link between Appadurai's notion of global space founded primarily in geopolitical types of interaction and complementary "geo-aesthetic" concepts of space, which have been mapped out in current cultural theory and are rooted, in part, in Western traditions of the visual arts. In a second step, we present a brief case study in the form of the comparison of the different book covers for the two versions of Christopher Bayly's study on globalization, *The Birth of the Modern World* (2004) and *El nacimiento del mundo modern* (2010), published for the English and Spanish-speaking worlds, respectively. Both book covers outline a specific 'geopolitical imaginary' that combines different world regions and different epochs, the period of their production around 1800 as well as the present period of their readings, and largely builds on the complex intersection of racial, gendered, and other asymmetrical power relations. It will be argued that both visual representations work well with the different colonial imaginaries to frame and also tone down complex and often chaotic processes of change. Both paintings show how geopolitical imaginaries in the early 19th century helped order the world and stabilize global power structures within what is termed "Western modernity." Of course when reproduced as book covers, the respective geopolitical imaginary of the paintings also changed due to the different audiences. [2]

Re-Conceptualizing Geopolitical Imaginaries

The anthropological account of modern globalizing processes, formulated by Appadurai in *Modernity at Large*, begins by describing the fundamental transformations of the cultural "gravitational field" (Appadurai 28) brought about by the European expansion politics of the early modern period. According to Appadurai, these transformations came with the rise of innovative technologies, new economic practices, and multiple migration processes that occurred in the subsequent centuries. In this view, the present cultural world which emerged out of these social, technical, and economic transformations is essentially marked by two interrelated features. First of

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all, the globalized world reveals itself as a complex transnational spatial order, shaped by the mobility and diasporic forces, by connective "flows" and cultural "disjunctures" (Appadurai 27-47) involving two countermovements that consist of "deterritorialization" and "re-territorialization." In this context, the globalizing world can no longer be interpreted as a homogeneous "global village" as suggested by Marshall McLuhan some decades ago. [3] Secondly, as a result, the continuously changing global system with its need for permanent social (re-)ordering is characterized by an extensive rise of collective self-representations. The emerging self-representations assign a new role to the social imaginary, whose particular cultural manifestations, operations, and functions need to be further clarified.

Three Dimensions of Imagination: Materiality, Creativity, and Sociality

With respect to the theoretical conceptualization of geopolitical imaginaries, it is first important to note that in Appadurai's anthropological description of the present global world imagination plays a fundamental role. We now live in a world, says Appadurai, "in which the imagination has become a collective, social fact" (5). His understanding of "imagination" is not easy to grasp. His basic assumption is that imagination results from the intricate interplay of three elements: "images," "the imagined," and "the imaginary." Unfortunately, Appadurai is not very explicit about the differences between them. We believe, however, that on an analytical level, these three elements point, indeed, to three dimensions that are pivotal to a better understanding of "imagination." Based on this assumption, we would like to suggest a reading of Appadurai that distinguishes three dimensions of "imagination": the material, the creative, and the social dimensions. Even though all three participate in "images," in "the imagined," and in "the social imaginary," analytically speaking, each also highlights a specific dimension of imagination. Let us elaborate on this a little bit more profoundly.

The term "images" points to the material dimension of "imagination" and is strongly grounded in Walter Benjamin's 1935 study on works of art at the time of their reproducibility, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit." As a consequence of significant changes in technological reproduction standards and of the increased spatial mobility of images, the social functions of works of art and other visual images also underwent a fundamental change. [4] According to Appadurai's as well as Benjamin's somewhat romantic take on art history, images in early modern or medieval times used to be tied to a specific context of production. In the modern epoch of technical reproducibility, however, images have gained the status of "immutable mobiles" as Bruno Latour (2009) would have it. Why and how have images obtained the ability to combine mobility with immutability? In an industrialized setting, images can be reproduced and thus

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overcome the limits of their primary localization in space and time. The possibilities of technical reproduction lead to the previously unknown mass diffusion of works of art and of forms of knowledge related to them. Due to changes in the technical standards of reproducibility, works of art have not only undergone significant permutations of their physical structure but also gained a notable independence from their original spatial-temporal locations, the "here" and "now" belonging to their originary existence. As a consequence, they have also lost the "aura" ascribed to the uniqueness and authenticity of works of art. [5]

Appadurai does not burden his readers with an overabundance of historical details. He leaves out, for instance, the early modern art market in the Netherlands with its production of roughly 70,000 paintings a year. Copying and the broad diffusion of works of art are not inventions of the late 19th century. He nevertheless makes a good point with respect to globalizing processes in claiming that images, if reproducible, allow for possible deterritorialization from a specific context. We might add that this characteristic of "images" also holds true in premodern times.

What can we derive from this understanding of images for Appardurai's concept of imagination? The political implications inherent in Appadurai's allusions to the cultural functions of mechanically produced images are more obvious still in the context of his observations on the creative force of "the imagined", formulated with explicit reference to Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" from his 1983 book of the same title. Historically, modern "imagined communities," for which the nation-state provides the paradigmatic model, emerged from a crossing of various social forces and developments. During the 17th century, "imagined communities" initiated the gradual decline of the traditional legitimacy of hierarchical dynastic realms introducing new horizontally structured types of community. As the example of the nation-state clearly shows, these communities were marked by their limited territorial extension within well-defined boundaries. The specific imagined status of these communities resulted from the representations of their members who, as a general rule, neither knew the majority of their fellow-members nor were able to establish a face-to-face communication with them, yet still believed in the communion that existed between them. [6] Thus the concept of "imagined communities," at least in theory, relies on the distinction between different types of immediate social interaction and patterns of experience on the one hand, and the production of imagined self-representations which replace this type of factual empirical experience on the other. However, unlike most theorists in the Marxist tradition, neither Anderson nor Appadurai come to define the social practice of imagination primarily in epistemological terms. Their concept repudiates the distinction between "truth" and "falsity" with respect to representations of social reality. On the contrary, for them, imagination is an inherently creative or constructive force that generates and organizes the entire social field. [7] Appadurai emphasizes that this interaction by no means remains confined to modern nation-states but needs

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to be extended to embrace types of "imagined worlds" which operate on subnational or supra- and multinational levels including different scales of political action and of spatial-temporal extension (32). [8] Explicitly, when it comes to globalization, "imagined communities" or "worlds" are nothing other than the effects of the creative dimension of imagination. The establishment of "imagined communities" can be understood as a countermovement to the deterritorialization processes described above. As a result, the creative dimension of imagination, as outlined here, must be understood as a force to "re-embed" entities. [9] Only the joint dynamic of de- and reterritorialization, or de- and recontextualization, motivates globalizing processes. Imagination brings together, unifies, re-embeds, or re-assembles diverse and somehow unconnected entites. As images point to the material dimension of imagination, "imagined communities" stress the creative side of imaginations.

Although Appadurai has defined imagination as a creative force and a "cultural agent", for him, imagination is not an ability possessed by an individual subject but is instead defined socially. This is where the social "imaginary" comes into play. Different theoretical approaches dedicated to "the (social) imaginary" provide a further frame of reference for Appadurai's conceptualization. These theoretical accounts – as represented notably by Emile Durkheim and Cornelius Castoriadis – do not view the imaginary as a phenomenon related to psychological faculties of the subject; they rather conceive it as a comprehensive cultural agent or force that, furthermore, escapes any strictly ontological definition. Following Durkheim, the imaginary can only be appropriately described within a functionalist framework ascribing to it the status of a true foundational figure that eventually comes to contribute to the constitution, regulation, and legitimization of the social formation as a whole. Thus, Durkheim's sociological approach, on the one hand, presents a positivist explanation of the social field that deliberately takes recourse to methodological assumptions derived from the natural sciences. He posits a strict analogy with classical physics in defining social phenomena as facts deprived of all individual intentionality. On the other, it foregrounds the role of the social imaginary conceived as a coercive force that accounts for the symbolic character of all social action, and articulates itself through multiple images, ideologies, symbols or myths. [10]

According to this view, symbols or images are not to be understood as mere effects or secondary representations of primary social processes but, quite the contrary, every society eventually owes its own existence to the cohesive power and prior activity of the imaginary. The imaginary, by providing beliefs or religious emblems and thus creating forms of social consensus, guarantees both the maintenance of the functional infrastructure of society in the present and its continuity in the future. As is foregrounded notably in Castoriadis' reformulation of social theory, the "radical imaginary" needs to be conceived as a primary creative force through which society ultimately

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comes to institute itself by inventing 'imaginary significations' that result in shared social meanings. [11] Thus the radical imaginary accounts for the original creation of society without positing a human, a divine, or any distinct origin whose existence could be described in terms of the "identitary logic" inherent in Western thought. Although the social imaginary can only be perceived through the secondary imaginary articulations, images or self-representations by way of which every society assembles and institutes itself, these articulations need to be ascribed to the primary creative activity of the imaginary that functions as the foundational force for any social formation, and is held to be responsible for the dynamic making or re-making of social reality itself, including its particular historical practices and political institutions.

The central ambiguities and complexities inherent in previous definitions of the social imaginary have also been taken up by Wolfgang Iser in his work *Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre* (1991) in an attempt to formulate a new aesthetic and anthropological theory of fictionality which firmly integrates the category of the imaginary into a triadic constellation combining it with the real and the fictive. Within literary texts, Iser argues, the real comes to be articulated through acts of fictionalization that select items from social and other extratextual realities and present fictive images or (imagined) worlds which highlight purposes, intentions, and aims that are not part of the realities reproduced. The acts of fictionalization serve to perform a restructuring of referential extratextual fields that corresponds to a process of de-realizing the real while at the same time conferring form and an assumed reality to the imaginary (which founds or institutes the real). They represent modes of a literary or aesthetic "world construction" that comes to create structures that do not pertain to the social, historical, cultural and literary systems, realities, or environments to which they refer, but do have a considerable impact on the understanding and perception of these realities, and therefore assume an important regulatory role in social life.

With respect to the varying theoretical accounts of phenomena related to the imagination conceived as a social agent, it can be concluded that the formation of "geopolitical imaginaries" principally relies on the close connection between "images" produced under conditions of mechanical reproduction and the idea of "imagined communities" or "worlds." The interplay of the materiality of "images," the creativity of "the imagined," and the social groundedness of the "imaginary" creates fictive realities, which at the same time become social facts that institute any given social formation as the imaginary is perceived to provide its central foundational condition of possibility.

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Appadurai's Understanding of Scapes

It is important to note, however, that it is not only the conception of the imaginary as a social practice, but also the question of how social and political spaces are formed, organized, and distributed that gains major significance in Appadurai's account of the emergence of the modern global world. According to Appadurai, although the globalized world constitutes a transnational space extending over the earth, it does not at all represent the allegedly deterritorialized and homogeneous universal culture referred to as the "global village." On the one hand, to be sure, the modern world is profoundly marked by the complex interplay of cultural, economic, or political interactions that follow the rules underlying the contemporary "network society" (Castells). In the global network society, social structures and activities assume the form of interconnected finance or communication flows that are organized around electronically processed technological information networks. On the other hand, however, the new global culture constitutes an utterly heterogeneous order permeated by multiple contradictions, ruptures, or disjunctures that mark the inner functioning of the fields of cultural, social, or economic activities as well as their complex interaction within particular communities.

This intricate interaction of the competing cultural dynamics of flows and disjunctures comes to implement a mobile cultural logic, which Appadurai seeks to account for by introducing the spatial model based on the notion of "scapes." The use of the suffix "scape," and its etymological implications, point to the spatial concept of the landscape. This concept was originally developed within aesthetics and art theory where, traditionally, it is set in close relation (and contrast) to the concept of nature, and thus refers to territorial places or locations. [12] A closer look, however, reveals a strong affinity to the "imagined communities" or "worlds" described by Benedict Anderson. The concept of scapes operates on the level of both small- and large-scale politics, and is subdivided into five types of scapes. The first four types refer to human migration dynamics extending in transnational space (ethnoscapes), to global operations of mechanical and informational technology (technoscapes), to the changing dispositions of transnational capital and national stock exchanges (financescapes) as well as to concatenations of images related to ideologies of states or social movements (ideoscapes). The last type (mediascapes) gains a particular status in that it refers to more than the technical possibilities of producing and disseminating information through contemporary print and electronic visual media or to (realistic or phantastic) images of the world produced by these media. It also comes to provide complex interconnected repertoires of images or narratives which appear to significantly include cultural ethnoscapes. The mediascapes can thus be conceived of as a highly reflexive second-order or metascapes, which register images referring to worlds that possess themselves an inherently imaginary character, and therefore may serve as a vehicle to display the hidden conditions of

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emergence of the first-order scapes (such as ethnoscapes) in which the globalized world is organized. Within the current cultural order of spatial scapes, the dynamics of global flows that create mobile relations and connections between the particular scapes or social fields of activity appear to be inextricably linked with the cultural logic of disjunctures. Disjunctures can be at work between ideoscapes and financescapes (as in countries where financial flows influence or transcend national politics) or between ideoscapes, ethnoscapes, and mediascapes (as in world regions where diasporic migration movements or international lifestyles communicated by media transgress national borders), but also define the inner disposition of each scape (as is the case in specific ideoscapes where different ideas of state, notions of national identity or microidentities enter into conflict). [13]

Appadurai's multilayered scape concept implies that "geopolitical imaginaries" work not only within specific scapes, but that they may also point to or even cause conflicts between different scapes. It may thus be concluded that the globalizing processes of de- and reterritorialization call forth the permanent making of ever new "imagined communities" on different scales and thus construct conflictive "geopolitical imaginaries." The current global culture produces complex geopolitical imaginaries marked by multiple disjunctures, inconsistencies, or contradictions, which present the globalized world as a highly heterogeneous assemblage or network of diverging scapes or imagined worlds.

Yet, the spatial order underlying the present global culture and the disjunctive network of geopolitical imaginaries, is marked by another distinctive trait that affects in particular the specific territorial status of social and political spaces. In contrast to Anderson who perceives territorial borders and locations as necessary conditions for the formation of all "imagined communities" (7), Appadurai defines modern scapes at least in part as immaterial sites or networks of cultural and political interaction that obey the potentially deterritorializing logic inherent to the spatial dynamics of global flows.

As mentioned above, the geopolitical concept of scapes, however, evokes a reterritorialized model of space that appears to be closely linked to aesthetic conceptions alluded to by the descriptions of scapes as "imaginary landscapes" and "perspectival constructs" (Appadurai 31, 33). These descriptions do more than illustrate the "historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors" (such as nation-states, diasporic communities or subnational movements) (33). They surreptitiously refer to the particular point of view adopted by a spectator or observer, and hence to visual categories or aesthetic models of world experience and perception (such as linear perspective or panoramic views) that have recently been explored in the context of contemporary landscape and urban studies or the French discipline of Géocritique. [14] Extending the argument developed by Appadurai, it may be concluded that geopolitical imaginaries can be viewed as

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articulations of a specific concept of imaginary space that rely strongly on the interplay of images and imagined worlds, and document or deploy both a disjunctive logic and reterritorializing dynamics which derive their central cultural impact from a hidden, but highly suggestive heuristic convergence of political and aesthetic foundations and perspectives.

Viewed from this perspective, we understand the respective geopolitical imaginaries as a culturally and historically situated, creative, socially-constructed and powerful concepts developed in response to the interwoven globalizing process of de- and reterritorialization. While de-territorialization tends to dissolve closed entities into flows, the imagination helps to reterritorialize entities within a geographical order.

Let us now look at how these theoretical considerations also help to analyze two paintings that have been taken out of their context of origin around 1800 and affixed on to a recently published book cover. What do we learn when we ask for their respective geopolitical imaginary?

A History Bestseller and its Diverse Book Covers: Christopher Bayly's *Birth of the Modern World* and *El Nacimiento del mundo modern*

With good reason, Christopher Bayly's book *Birth of the Modern World*, first published in 2004, is highly praised. Niall Ferguson describes it as "a masterpiece" as we can read on the cover of the original book in English as well as on that of the 2010 Spanish translation. The visual representations appearing on both covers trace out the making of geopolitical imaginaries, which, as argued above, build on the intricate interplay of images and imagined worlds. In particular, they reflect the historical rise of specific imagined spaces closely related to the French Revolution and the emergence of asymmetrical race and gender relations characteristic of the globalized world in Modernity.

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The painting of the English original is well chosen. Ann Louis Girodet (1767-1824), one of the first romantic French artists, became fairly well known for his portraits, some of which showed members of the Napoléon family. His Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Belley, painted in 1797, illustrates perfectly many of Bayly's main theses, one of which is the growth of global uniformity in respect to bodily practices such as clothing and behaviour during the "long 19th century." Uniformity, of course, stems from "uniform" – usually the indistinguishable clothing of soldiers. And, indeed, the black protagonist in the painting is wearing a uniform – the uniform of the French National Convention. Throughout the book, Bayly only once mentions the cover. He hints at the painting's symbolic power and its expression of the universal intention of the French revolution. By doing so, Bayly illustrates at first sight a particular historical geopolitical imaginary, a specific imagined world corresponding to an ideoscape expressed through the geographical and the political index of the two men: Jean Baptiste Belley, a hero of the Haitian Revolution, was elected to the French National Convention in 1793 for representing St. Domingue. Abbé Raynal, shown as a bust in the background, was one of the most important abolitionists of his time, a French philosopher and a member of the famous encyclopedists. As a matter of course, he represents the European world region with its long tradition of political reasoning, rooted in Greek philosophy, symbolized by the classically-styled sculpture. John Baptiste Belley, in this view, seems to incorporate a more recent development. While his attire also points to Europe, his skin and his attitude, to which we will come back later, clearly symbolize a different world region. From this, one could conclude that the painter of this artefact expresses, willingly or not, a geopolitical imaginary, which relies on the universality and homogeneity of transnational space. Put briefly, this geopolitical imaginary constitutes a particular ideoscape that comprises European born Republican ideas and their diffusion all over the world. Along Christopher Bayly's lines, one could go one step further and claim that the geopolitical imaginary expressed here includes a historical narrative of emancipation that begins in Greece, picked up speed in the French Revolution and will one day win over the entire world. Mapping out a new transnational type of "lineage" based on the traditional notion of translatio, it offers a universalist interpretation which might be the reason the publishing house chose this painting for the cover.

Yet the universalist implications of the picture also become apparent on another level, as they deeply inform the specific strategies of visual representation that characterize the painting. Thus the juxtaposition of a bust (Raynal) and the portrait of a living person (Belley) not only forms a reflexive mediascape that relies on the superposition of two different art forms used to express political issues and thereby points to changes in art itself and the diverging forms of its embeddedness in the field of political action and practices. What seems yet more important to note is that in combining a bust and a physical human body within the same pictorial space and

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presenting both as citizens of the French Nation, instead of reducing the former to a mere attribute illustrating central properties of the portrayed person [15], the painting modifies a widespread tradition of 18th-century portraiture and assembles two actors within the same ideoscape. Due to their heterogeneous mode of being, however, the two are deprived of the possibility of engaging in immediate face-to-face communication. By uniting two persons within the same political space who belong to separate ontological spheres of existence, the painting thus offers an image of the making of the French Nation and the modern world as a universal geopolitical imaginary which, in fact, represents an imagined world or community that suspends any direct interaction between its members.

Finally, the interpretation of the geopolitical imaginary as an all-embracing universal space is also suggested by the representation of the sky and the line of the horizon. The line extends both the contours of the cummerbund worn by Belley and the corresponding line of the bust inscription. As such, the line establishes a close connection between the two representatives of the imaginary political space defining the French Nation and the topographical space of nature that, in the painting, forms the background of the depicted persons symbolizing the sphere of political action.

The striking interconnectedness of human actors and natural environment suggests that the painting relates the specific ideoscape that epitomizes central political ideas associated with the French Nation and the imagination of the modern world as a whole to the aesthetic and visual model of the imaginary landscape. The landscape, according to Appadurai, forms an implicit topographical matrix for the description of political space under conditions of modern globalization, and, as is suggested by the representation of the sky, appears to confer a cosmological dimension upon the depicted political scape. The painting thus maps out a geopolitical imaginary that performs a de-territorializing cosmic expansion of social space. This specific geopolitical imaginary, however, in contrast to traditional cosmological visualizations of political power, does not at all serve to legitimize vertically structured transcendent types of governance (such as sacral monarchy), but undergoes a significant shift in meaning. It now appears to indicate, quite on the contrary, the new claim to horizontally-defined geocultural universality propagated by the political actors of the French Revolution and applied to the extensive diffusion of Republican ideas throughout the entire world. [16]

However, if we take into serious consideration that geopolitical imaginaries are embedded in various power relations involving the intersection of class, race, gender, and the like, we may ask whether this affirmation of universalist geopolitics really is the painting's main concern. Is it really addressing the universal intention of the French Revolution, and does this claim to universality mark "the birth of the modern world?" Let us very briefly challenge this understanding by taking into account the specific historical context of the painting and its method of visualized comparisons. By

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doing so, we can show that this painting does more than point to deterritorializing processes such as universalist geopolitics. While localizing the meaning of the painting within a specific local, cultural, and historical setting, it can be demonstrated that it also points to a reterritorializing process.

Victoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff (2000) has correctly pointed out that Girodet's painting can be read as a comment on the revolutionary debates over race and citizenship. For a better understanding of the painting, we must recall the main questions of these debates as provoked and personalized by the citizen Belley. His arrival in Parisian society in late 18th century hit the mark of the young republic. How inclusive was the "declaration of human rights?" Should a former slave, taken away from Senegal, sold in St. Domingue, a black man who bought his way out of slavery independently and who fought as a Captain of the infantry in the Haitian Revolution; should someone like him represent the French colonies? Could Africans be citizens? If black men were equal to white men, what other changes or subversions would that bring about?

At first glance, Christopher Bayly's short remark on the universal meaning of the picture and its related geopolitical imaginary seems convincing. The painting certainly stresses the universality of emancipation. Belley, adopting a relaxed, but at the same time powerful posture, leans against the bust of the well-known encyclopaedist. He is elegantly dressed and wearing a cummerbund in blue, white, and red – the colours of the Revolution. In Christopher Bayly's reading, Belley appears not only as an emancipated slave in a literal sense, but also as a free man on a symbolic level. Supported by Raynal, one of the most famous abolitionists of the time, Bayly's interpretation suggests that Belley could be part of an emerging public and that he could also represent the new self-confident enlightened (male) subject keen on using his, as the German philosopher of the enlightenment in 1784 would have it, "own understanding" (Kant).

However, could Belley really be a member of an enlightenend society on equal rights? On second glance, doubts arise over this interpretation. The painting can be read as a comparison between the European philosopher Raynal and the Afro-Carribean revolutionist Belley. Comparisons, however, are never neutral (cf. Longxi). Generally speaking, comparisons always play with the relation of the "own" and the "other." Let us very briefly elaborate on this. A comparison not only relates two entities, it is at the same time a triangulation: comparisons include the presumption of similarity and the observation of differences with respect to a tertium comparationis. [17] Even more importantly, comparing is a social practice. This means, in other words, that comparisons are not defined by the characteristics of the entities compared. On the contrary, it is the comparing actors who imagine and thus create while comparing the respective entities to compare. Doing comparisons, we must highlight, is also based on the ability and force of imagination. [18] From there, it does not come as a surprise that comparisons are always situated in a specific historical

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context and that power relations shape them. The emphasis on one out of the three elements - difference, sameness or tertium - depends not only on the historical and cultural context, but also on the specific situation in which a comparison is drawn. Indeed, a closer look at Girodet's painting reveals that the painting does not primarily foreground the similarities between both male individuals but prefers differences. The most obvious contrasts (vivid/dull; black/white) were combined with the construction of different kinds of masculinities and, as we will see, with a different status within the process of civilization. [19] Catherine Hall argues along the same lines in her review of Bayly's book:

> Yet what is so striking about the image is the corporeality of his black body, his sensual energy, the exhibition of his virility with his fingers pointing to his bulging phallus, the idealisation of sexualised black masculinity and its link to the idea of the 'noble savage'.

The observers of the time easily understood this allusion to the 'noble savage' as described in Rousseau's books. Viewed against this background of the enlightened political movement driven by reason instead of sentiments or the body, Raynal represents the "triumph of reason and spirit over matter." Hall (2004) continues:

> Belley may be an emancipated man in European dress, yet his ineradicable vitality legitimates the European rule of reason. But what is mind and reason without body, sexuality, and emotionality? This double portrait, one might suggest, tells us much about modernity, a modernity structured through particular images of masculinity and racial difference.

We might add: What makes the double portrait so fascinating is that it not only works with dichotomies, differences, and contrasts, but with comparisons. This means, in other words, the differences and contrasts between the two protagonists come along with the sameness. Both were male citizens. Interestingly enough, what is claimed as tertium is left to the discretion of the observer. Is it humanity? Is it citizenship? The painting fascinatingly fluctuates between highlighting the contrasts and leaving the tertium vague. Depending on the assumed tertium, the implied sameness varies. If we assume "humanity," for instance, then the sameness will include human rights. If we assume citizenship as a set tertium, it will also include political participation. The painting thus symbolizes far more than the universality of the values of the French Revolution. It opens the door for a possible limitation of the range of the universalist values of the French Revolution which now seem to apply exclusively to members of a specific world region and a specific gender, and consequently come along with a geographical and temporal index to help construct world regional hierarchies. European modernity is built on shaky grounds. In a similar vein, Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff has conclusively argued that the construction of masculinity in the double portrait says a great deal about the ambivalences of modernity.

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It is worth pausing for a moment to muse about Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff's and Catherine Hall's interpretations of this portrait more profoundly. Taking a postcolonial approach, the two scholars have delivered thoughtful insights into the male subjectivities constructed along different lines and determined by gender issues and racial difference. Yet, with respect to the formation of the particular geopolitical imaginary mapped out in the painting, it is possible to draw some further conclusions regarding the rise of modernity. For the painting presents itself as the site of emergence of far-reaching political reflections which in addressing issues concerning "race" and "citizenship" ostentatiously display a complex confrontation between ethnoscapes and ideoscapes, that reveal themselves to be built upon highly contradictory and ultimately incompatible political norms and values. The painting quite evidently gains the status of a mediascape, a reflexive second-order scape which not only juxtaposes different art forms expressing issues concerning political representation, but deliberately produces an image of heterogeneous imagined worlds in which the Enlightenment ideoscape and its claim of equality enters into conflict with the colonial ethnoscape and the experience of racial difference. It thereby delineates a heterogeneous geopolitical imaginary that relies neither on the mere homology nor on the simple opposition of competing cultural scapes, but comes to display the complex concatenations or dynamic flows and the contradictions or growing disjunctures that define the particular conditions of their making and re-making in modernity.

We can assume that the ambivalences expressed in Girodet's painting as outlined above were one of the reasons why Christopher Bayly's book appeared with a different cover when it was published in Spanish:

EL NACIMIENTO DEL MUNDO MODERNO
1780-1914
C.A. BAYLY

«Una obra maestra» Niall Ferguson
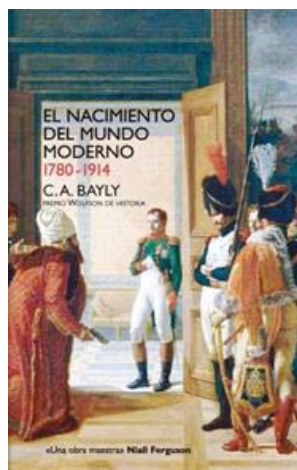
Of course we can only speculate about the motivations that led to changing the cover. However, it seems likely that the Spanish-speaking public in Latin-America would not have appreciated the double portrait of Raynal and Belley. The book *El nacimiento del mundo moderno* came with a painting that originally dates to only a few years later. It shows a different scene, although one that

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also plays with geopolitical imaginaries built on the interplay of images and imagined worlds. François-Henri Mulard (1769-1850) painted a historical scene from which it got its title: "Napoléon reçoit Reza Bey l'ambassadeur de Perse au château de Finkenstein" (1810). Only three years prior, Napoleon had met the Persian envoy at the Prussian castle Finkenstein, where he had his camp during the campaign for Russia. Persia expected help against Russia while Napoleon needed support to conquer British-India. After the Franco-Russian peace of Tilsit (1807), the Alliance quickly lost its importance and Napoleon never arrived in India. [20]

Again we see a painting that is based on contrasts and differences. Napoleon wearing military clothing, and standing in his typical pose with the right hand in his jacket, is presented in full light. The Persian ambassador who approaches Napoleon in a servile manner with a sketchy bow wears a turban and a colourful red robe. What the book cover does not show is that behind the ambassador stand his entourage of six other diplomats in exotic clothing and some officers dressed in European style. The pictorial space of the painting thus functions once more as a reflexive mediascape which, in its visualization techniques, delineates a particular geopolitical imaginary in confronting competing ethno- and ideoscapes whose differences this time are marked by the distribution of light and shadow, and by the presence of a physical threshold that divides the imaginary space into two parts representing two epochs as well as two regions of the world, as the Orientalist world seems to be from another epoch.

At the same time, the second painting reveals more plainly than the first that the depicted scapes represent imagined worlds resembling particular perspectival constructs belonging to the tradition of the visual arts. This is revealed by the representation of Napoleon that builds on a particular distribution of foreground and background that evokes the rules underlying the visual technique of linear perspective. On the one hand, the square pattern marking the floor recalls the "diagrammatic" type of evidence related to the technique of calculating or plotting geometrical points and transferring them on a squared grid used for measuring the exact distances between painted objects. [21] On the other hand, Napoleon is placed behind an open door that resembles the "window to the world," which in Leon Battista Alberti's famous description of perspectiva artificialis, is associated with the constitution of a three-dimensional space of illusion, a truly "imaginary" space which extends behind the two-dimensional surface of the picture and symbolizes the empirical world. [22] The division of pictorial space following the rules of the visualization technique of linear perspective thus foregrounds the artful construction of an imagined world, a genuine geopolitical imaginary within which Napoleon represents the illuminated and enlightened world of modernity that is set in sharp contrast to the antiquated Oriental world epitomized by the Persian ambassador.

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However, the threshold not only serves to divide the imaginary political space, but also comes to symbolize a possible contact zone. Even though the observer cannot be sure that Napoleon would really cross the threshold, the painting appears to deploy a spatial configuration of ethno- and ideoscapes which, in combining different masculinities, different temporalities, and different regions of the world, reveals itself to be both disjunctive and connective and thus points once more to the complexities, inconsistencies, and heterogeneities inherent in the geopolitical imaginaries underlying a modernity which according to both paintings and Bayly's interpretation, has a deeply Eurocentric orientation.

Furthermore, like the first painting, the second also thoroughly reflects the particular visualization strategies that progressively unfold the making of geopolitical imaginaries in modernity. It is significant that the natural landscape (and the cosmological setting) symbolized in the first painting by the sky here is replaced by the representation of history, evoked by the battle painting appearing in the background of the picture. This battle painting, in fact, focuses on the historical context of the depicted scene in that it possibly refers to the Coalition Wars in which Napoleon was still engaged at the time the scene took place. It can thus be concluded that the second work of art suggests a close connection between the 'imaginary world' presented within the painting, and the historical or political world outside the visual representation. It is interesting to note, however, that the battle painting shown within Mulard's work of art has never been part of the collection exhibited at Schloss Finckenstein. [23] As such, there is a striking discrepancy between the visual representation of the historical scene taking place at Finckenstein, and the factual environment of the battle painting. Mulard's painting, which was produced according to Napoleon's memory of the depicted scene, thus displays the fundamental independence of the work of art from its originary spatial-temporal location, from its empirical situatedness in a primary "here" and "now" which, consequently, no longer serves to guarantee the authenticity of its visual representation. It thereby also comes to reflect both its own (mobile) status as a modern work of art produced under conditions of mechanical reproduction (which also accounts for its mass diffusion on the book cover) and its contribution to the making of geopolitical imaginaries in modernity. For, in fusing the visual representation with the political reality of the Coalition Wars, while at the same time inserting these wars into a new empirical environment, the painting performs the simultaneous processes of de-realizing the real and conferring "reality" to the imaginary. Thus the painting constructs once more a highly complex 'geopolitical imaginary' which documents the disjunctures, ambivalences, and contradictions inherent to the political world of modernity. It also reflects the indispensable interplay of "images" and "imagined worlds" that exposes the "imaginary" as an effect of a social practice and the primary cohesive force through which every social community ultimately comes to institute itself.

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Conclusion

"Geopolitical imaginaries" are both an object of investigation and an analytical tool for cultural and historical studies. With the help of Appadurai's conceptualization of the term "imagination" we have shown that imagination has three dimensions, the material, the creative, and the social. By discussing the role of images, the imagined, and the imaginary, we have underscored that these three dimensions work simultaneously when we deal with geopolitical imaginaries. Borrowing a term from Benedict Anderson, we have been illustrating the creative power of the socially defined imaginary with a close interpretation of two paintings from the first decades of the 19th century. Geopolitical imaginaries become even more important because they can be understood as a powerful, culturally and historically situated, creative and socially constructed answer to the intertwined globalizing processes of de- and reterritorialization. While disjunctions and flows tend to dissolve geopolitical and other entities, the culturally shared imaginaries help to reterritorialize them within a geographical order. We can conclude that, in the very same way that "imagined communities" work where social order is concerned, so do geopolitical imaginaries where geopolitical orders are concerned.

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Endnotes

[1] For an extensive account of the descriptive models concerning globalization processes outlined here, see notably: Werber. For an exemplary conceptualization of the global dimension of contemporary literature centered on the Spanish author Ray Loriga, see: Kramer.

[2] Unfortunately, the publishing houses did not answer our question as to why they chose which painting. It becomes obvious, however, why the cover of the English book version seemed to be inconvenient for the market the Spanish translation aimed at.

[3] On the term 'global village' and its cultural and historical connotations, see among others: McLuhan. On the spatial implications inherent in the term 'deterritorialization', see: Deleuze/Guattari 1980, Deleuze/Guattari 1991.

[4] In this perspective, the term 'image' functions as an umbrella term including both 'images' and 'pictures' which, within contemporary art and media theory, are frequently set in contrast; on the systematic distinction between 'images' and 'pictures' see in particular: Mitchell.

[5] On the modern loss of former standards guaranteeing the authenticity or uniqueness of art based on the distinction between 'original' and 'copy', see: Benjamin (437-439).

[6] For a concise account of the imaginary status of 'imagined communities', formulated with respect to the historical model of the nation, see the definition provided by Anderson: "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (15).

[7] Imagination is at the same time characterized by a relation of strict interdependence linking it with various further cultural, political or economic practices and regulating notably the close interaction between systems of production, styles of governance and technologies of communication or information. On the 'creative' force of the imagination, see notably: Anderson (6); on the definition of the imagination which views it as a "social practice" or an "organized field of social practices", see: Appadurai (31).

[8] However, the need for extending the definition of imagined communities centered on the paradigm of the nation-state is also articulated by Anderson himself (6).

[9] The idea of de- and reterritorializing has been put forward also by other thinkers, even though they named it differently. Anthony Giddens for instance speaks of "re- and deembedding." Bruno Latour calls it the "reassembling of the social."

[10] On the positivist founding of sociology, see in particular: Durkheim; for a suggestive account of Durkheim's sociological approach see also: Sironneau, Maffesoli.

[11] On the conception of the "radical imaginary," see Castoriadis (559-609); for a concise synopsis of Castoriadis's theory of the imaginary, see also: Iser (350-377).

[12] On the significance the concept of 'landscape' assumes within traditional aesthetics and art theory, see notably: Ritter.

[13] For an extensive list of examples illustrating 'disjunctive relationships' that are operating both among and within different scapes, see: Appadurai (39-43).

[14] On the development of contemporary 'landscape' and 'urban studies', with reference to visual dispositives such as linear perspective or panoramic views, see notably: Dorrian/Rose; for a systematic description of "cityscapes" as a visual concept and its significance within contemporary 'urban studies', see: Lindner. On a new aesthetic 'thinking' of landscape and on the premises and implications inherent in the French discipline of Géocritique see Collot 2011, Collot 2014, Westphal.

[15] On Girodet's critical confrontation of the 18th-century tradition of portrait painting, see the concise observations of Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff (91).

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[16] This transfer of meaning regarding cosmological forms of representation confirm Bruno Latour's extension of the concept of the 'cosmos' which he views – in explicit accordance with accounts formulated by the French ethnologist Philippe Descola and the notion of 'cosmopolitics' developed by Isabelle Stengers – as a space of political action accessible through different experimental heuristics that define varying systems of world knowledge and perception throughout the centuries.

[17] See for a definition of comparisons: Heintz.

[18] For a profound discussion on what actors do when they compare, see: Epple/Erhart.

[19] Enlightening insights in the microdynamics of visual comparisons in art history gives Johannes Grave (in: Epple/ Erhart).

[20] Whether Napoleon had concrete plans to attack British-India is still a matter of debate. The British authorities in India, however, took it for granted (Ingram 117).

[21] On the premises underlying the principle of 'diagrammatic evidence', see notably: Schäffner; on the distinction between 'pictorial' and 'diagrammatic' modes of vision see likewise Bogen/Thürlemann; for a pertinent account of the development of the early modern 'perspective science' which is based on the principles of 'rationality' and 'proportionality' rather than on aesthetic effects of illusion, see also: Büttner.

[22] On the significance of Alberti's metaphor of the window and the negation of the picture's material surface implied in it, see the early systematic observations formulated by Erwin Panofsky; see also among others: Belting.

[23] See the information on Mulard's paiting provided by the website of Schloss Finckelstein: "Napoleon hat das Bild später (1820-30) in Paris malen lassen und selbst dem Maler die nötigen Anweisungen aus dem Gedächtnis gemacht. Die Schlachtenbilder an den Wänden des Vorraumes haben aber niemals in Finckenstein gehangen."

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