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Reading Time, Knowledge, and Power in the Ibero-American Atlantic

In a recent special volume of the *Revista Iberoamericana*, Eyda M. Merediz and Nina Gerassi-Navarro presented a thorough description of current debates on what they called, after Joseba Gabilondo, the Hispanic Atlantic. In the text, they identified the challenges the establishment of this literary studies field faces: "El reto se plantea en cómo trascender unos estudios transatlánticos que siempre se imaginan entre el expansionismo global español, la dominante academia norteamericana y la indiferencia latinoamericana [The challenge comes in how to transcend transatlantic studies that are always imagined as being between Spanish global expansion, the dominant North American academy and Latin American indifference]" (614).[1] The essay also made a case for examining the Spanish- and Portuguese-language occurrences of oceanic exchange, since to date most Atlantic literary studies have focused on Anglo-Atlantic relationships, and argued that what grounds the Hispanic Atlantic as a concept for literary study is the notion of space it implies.[2] According to these authors, a newly thought Hispanic Atlantic, by contrast to one founded on Anglo-European understandings of the space, would mean that

> a partir de la globalización, hay que representar no solo la condición hispana contemporánea en ambos lados del Atlántico, sino que además hay que repensar la modernidad y la nación (estado), de tal manera que tanto la modernidad como el nacionalismo se convierten en un efecto imaginario de un sistema atlántico imperialista que comienza con el temprano expansionismo español y portugués y continúa con el imperialismo norteamericano contemporáneo.

> [from globalization on, it is necessary not only to represent the contemporary Hispanic condition on both sides of the Atlantic, but also to rethink modernity and the nation (state), in such a way that modernity and nationalism are converted into an imaginary effect of the imperialist Atlantic system that begins with the early Spanish and Portuguese expansion and continues with contemporary North American imperialism.] (622)

Merediz and Gerassi-Navarro's essay reflects an increasingly common desire to move the field of study from a focus on circumscribed nation-states to the broader concept of space thought through imperialism, therefore widening the geographical frame of postcolonial Latin American studies. Nevertheless, the critical approach with which they conclude their article is static: "los estudios transatlánticos no necesariamente proponen una metodología nueva o innovadora ausente en otros campos de investigación [transatlantic studies do not necessarily propose a new or innovative methodology not already present in other fields of study]" (629).

Placing my work in dialogue with the ideas presented by Merediz and Gerassi-Navarro, as well as other theorists of the Atlantic, in this chapter I will illustrate from a theoretical perspective that the daily newspaper chronicle complicates the epistemological relationships between nation, modernity, and the oceanic space that the article above describes. It does so by bringing time back into the debate on the imaginaries of nation and empire that circulate in the Atlantic space. Nuancing the discussion of community and subjectivity as always-already imperial or determined by the power of the nation-state, I therefore propose a methodology based on what I call "meanwhile reading" that does attempt to posit a new approach to the transatlantic field. As I explained in the introduction, the key to this idea is to think about subjectivity as palimpsestic, ephemerally inscribed in a thought, felt, and corporeal temporality that is both "meanwhile" and simultaneous. In the context of the *crónica*, this means considering that whenever a subject is reading a given text, she is also, meanwhile, drawing on knowledges not just from outside the local or national framework, but also from outside the limits of written discourse to understand her subjectivity. The meanwhile reading subject, then, is a subject whom the chronicle daily addresses as inscribed in multiple ways of knowing simultaneously. These simultaneous ways of knowing cross between ideology, discourse, affect, ethical thought, visualized images, and corporeality. However, the intersections of these knowledges are always temporary, changing from moment to moment.

By taking into account this simultaneous and in-process temporality of knowledge, I show in this chapter that, although imperialized structures of power are an important force in the contemporary Atlantic space, we can use the daily forms of knowledge that come together there to rethink the effects of modernity, nationalism, and globalization as totalizing structures of power. Instead, the smaller instants of time that can be thought through reading newspaper *crónicas* and blogs call into question the notion of an overarching imperial, (trans)national, globalized, or otherwise unifying transatlantic epistemology. Just as the chronicle questions the notion of an all-encompassing national imaginary by allowing us to conceptualize a palimpsestic subject engaging multiple forms of transtemporal and transatlantic knowledges, it also destabilizes the notion of an all-encompassing imperial imaginary by taking into account the simultaneity and multiplicity of thought that occupies specific moments of time while reading. Thus, we can rethink the presumed coloniality of the subject inscribed ideologically by the nation-state, imperialism, or globalization by rethinking our own critical presumptions about subjectivity and power as they relate to our epistemological constructs of history and time. Doing so will not undo the very real, material effects of power that continue to dominate in the Atlantic space, but it will allow us to begin the arduous task of *thinking* about power in the Ibero-American Atlantic from a temporal perspective of simultaneity, ephemerality, and the meanwhile.

THE NON-TIME OF AN IMPERIAL ATLANTIC

The conclusion that no new methodology exists for thinking the space of the Atlantic seems at first glance to contradict the intense amount of scholarly work that has gone into defining it as a field since Paul Gilroy first made reference to the Atlantic as a unique space of black culture in 1993. Gilroy signaled the possibility of an imaginary that could "transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity" (19). He also defined the Atlantic as unified, something cultural historians could see as "one single, complex unit of analysis [. . . in order] to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" (15). Since then, this broader understanding of a globally complex, yet spatially delimited, geography of crossing has received support from proponents of the area studies model of scholarship (Trigo 5–6).[3] Critics such as Gaurav Desai, for instance, have argued for understanding how global flows of commerce and information connect places as disparate as New York City and the Indian Ocean through the routes the Atlantic and other waterways make possible (715).

Yet the difficulty of envisioning the Atlantic as a single unit has led to numerous historical and literary definitions of the space as a geocultural configuration.[4] By "geocultural" I am referring to the mapping of a presumably shared culture onto a geographical territory. As Bonura has pointed out, geocultural areas tend to elide difference and instead "depend upon the epistemological function of the nation-state as a primary unit of analysis for their geographical limits" (100). Within the transatlantic studies sphere, this epistemology of the nation-state is replaced with even vaguer area studies designations. Qualifying terms such as "Hispanic," "African," "Luso-Brazilian," "Francophone," and "Anglo" rooted mainly in area-studies or language-based models have been used to specify the provenance of writers, cultural events, languages, and theoretical perspectives explored in relation to that space. Other critics, such as Ralph Bauer, have made claims toward a hemispheric studies model that would bring North and South America together in a way that resists the typical East-West approach.[5] Paradoxically, these gestures succeed mainly in fragmenting the Atlantic space again, falling back onto reductive national or regional constructs of identity to frame critical analyses.

Merediz and Gervassi-Navarro's description of the Atlantic as imperial reflects the impact postcolonial studies has had on Hispanic studies over the last few decades. Indeed, their definition of the field comes in a volume dedicated specifically to a Latin Americanist perspective on the advent of transatlantic studies. As Merediz later writes in her own article in the volume, the recognition of the Atlantic as imperialized is meant to highlight what she sees as the new field's potential for relegating Latin America once again to a secondary position within Hispanic studies. The concern is that Peninsularists waving the flag of transatlanticism will again take over an academic space that Latin Americanists have fought hard to delineate as their own. Similarly, recent volumes on the Hispanic Atlantic edited by Ileana Rodríguez and Josebe Martínez have sought to inscribe transatlantic studies within frameworks derived from already-established postcolonial and decolonial approaches, utilizing concepts such as the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge to understand how texts and communities cross the Atlantic space (Rodríguez and Martínez, vol. 1, 7). Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel has likewise framed her discussion of transatlanticism in the Hispanic studies field through a conceptualization of the colonial field.

This turn to a postcolonial or decolonial critical lens reflects quite well the disciplinary concerns that have dominated discussion over the last decade or so on the merits and problems of extending the transatlantic paradigm to the Hispanic studies field. Increasingly, the transatlantic approach is being read as a subset of Hispanism. Concerns about Peninsularists overtaking a Latin American perspective have therefore been matched by scholars working primarily from an Iberian perspective who already feel that the previously marginalized Latin American field of study has become more attractive in the United States to students and university administrators alike. The complaint is that Spanish departments now focus less on teaching the literature and culture of Spain and more on that of Latin America (Resina, *Del hispanismo* 29). In this view, the transatlantic perspective represents the threat of an inverse imperialism, where Spain falls victim to Latin America.

Throughout these discourses, the battle to define what a transatlantic approach means has been fought within the contemporary realm of area studies and the contours of Hispanism as a field, and not necessarily on the surfaces drawn by the historical, literary, and cultural exchanges that have taken place within the Atlantic world of the last five hundred years. The result is often a binary understanding of power, where Latin America faces off with Spain, or at times with North America, but always within a circumscribed understanding of the Atlantic as grounded in the Spanish language and in a presumption that the imbalance of power reflects an imperial ideology. Indeed, the question of Hispanism has preoccupied numerous scholars who presume that the uniting force for studying Spain and Latin America together would be the two continents' shared language (Resina, *Del hispanismo* 29). This supposition, however, is highly problematic if one wishes to address the multiple indigenous languages in Latin America, not to mention Catalan, Galician, Basque, and Portuguese. Using Spanish as the basis for comparison by default relegates these other languages to a secondary position.[6] At the same time, the Hispanist question presumes, even more problematically, that language is the primary reflection of culture, when in fact there are multiple practices, affects, and bodies that can create or reflect culture without the intercession of linguistic discourse. Moreover, without nuance, grounding the field in Hispanism maintains a division between a North and a South Atlantic, where the North is often represented by an Anglo-European approach and is therefore considered outside—or, at best, in strict opposition to—the realm of the Iberian and Latin American experiences; as Sara Castro-Klarén has pointed out, there has been a dearth of "diagonal" readings across the geographies of the Atlantic space, without which we continue to perpetuate these divisions (97). This is in spite of the fact that there have been centuries of commercial, ideological, and political interactions between these overlapping languages and cultures that make the concept of a solely Hispanic Atlantic difficult to sustain.

In some ways the renunciation of the search for a new methodology for conceptualizing the Atlantic world and the return to Hispanism for this framework may reflect Julio Ortega's early assertion that one of the strengths of the transatlantic field would be precisely its "post-theoretical" approach, a suggestion that has been critiqued in some quarters (77).[7] Yet, as Abril Trigo has pointed out, Ortega draws on Laclau for this statement, where Laclau says that the post-theoretical is not atheoretical, such that "Post-theory, in a sense, would designate a new brand of meta-theoretical discourse" (Trigo 8). The result, Trigo avers, is that the very notion of "post-theoretical" itself becomes a strategic move seeking to redraw the borders of Hispanism as a field. To do this, however, I would suggest that it is necessary to recognize the many ways in which multiple subjectivities, communities, and power structures overlap. This would mean considering the space of exchange as multiple in its linguistic and cultural crossings, making the division of the Atlantic into a Hispanic and a non-Hispanic space impossible. While some may worry that this means exchanging the disciplinary territory of a Spanish department and field for a comparative literature methodology that threatens to dismantle it, it is possible to distinguish the struggle for presence within the university from the critical tools we use to do our work. The case for studying and teaching Hispanism can be made to administrators without scholars having to insist on a closed methodological and critical field of study. To that end, I advocate for thinking about Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula through a broader notion of the everyday Atlantic. This may include, but would not be limited to, an Atlantic that is not thought as Hispanic, but rather as Ibero-American. Although the term "Ibero-American Atlantic" is itself a geocultural designation, I use it primarily to complicate the separation of the Anglo-, black, and Hispanic Atlantics that has hitherto hindered a more comparative understanding of the broad number of cross-cultural relationships that have taken place in the Atlantic world over the last five hundred years. I wish to signal a broader conceptualization of space than is captured by the linguistically limited understanding of the Hispanic Atlantic, while also distinguishing it from the overarching, too-general concept of the Atlantic alone. The term is not meant to imply a dominance of the Iberian Peninsula over Latin America, but rather is meant to be inclusive in signaling the broad notion of America—North and South—alongside the multiplicity of cultures included within Spain and Portugal. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that on a daily basis this Ibero-American Atlantic of necessity crosses with other transatlantic, and, indeed, more broadly transoceanic, cultures in circulation. In that sense, even if we use the broader designation of the Ibero-American Atlantic, the everyday Atlantic is perhaps a more useful category, because it confirms that the Atlantic space is always reopening and reshaping itself.

In order to understand how daily time affects this space, though, it is necessary to return to the dominant assumptions that delineated previous considerations of the Atlantic field. These have included three main tendencies. One is the imperializing understanding of the space and the imaginary surrounding it I have outlined above. Outside the Hispanic studies field, though, the Atlantic has primarily been theorized with regard to the predominance of the nation-state in determining subjectivity. Paul Giles has argued that the national imaginary should be thought of as an "aestheticized form [that], like Christianity at the end of the nineteenth century, functions more as a signifier than a signified, a discourse whose emotive valence retains a capacity to shape the direction of material objects and events even though its theoretical coherence has been emptied out" (20). For Giles, this means that we must recognize the role that other nations play in determining nationalisms at home. Hester Blum's more recent approach is probably more indicative of the increasing application of a transnational critical lens to transatlantic crossings. She argues that studying the kinds of subjectivity found in maritime literature will break through certain legal structures associated with the nation-state: "[F]reedom from national belonging can make possible other ways of understanding affiliation, citizenship, mobility, rights, and sovereignty, all of which have been read in recent critical history as overdetermined by nationalism" (671). A third perspective has considered the Atlantic as part of a global understanding of capitalism in circulation. William J. Nichols supposes as much when he argues that a comparative reading of the *novela negra* in Spain and Mexico can be articulated through the lens of neoliberalism as a shared experience. Theorists such as Barney Warf, however, have tried to complicate such an overarching approach, appropriating the term "glocal" in order to demonstrate the multiple and geographically distinct ways in which global networks, rather than overarching, monolithic systems, manifest in local areas.

In Merediz and Gerassi-Navarro's case, their conclusion that the appropriate theories for studying the Atlantic can be found in already-established fields supports their suggestion that its communities and subjects must be understood in terms of the postcolonial critical approach. This conclusion also serves, however, to reinforce the voices of doubt that view the transatlantic field as simply a new name for an old dynamic, one that has nothing new to offer. Critiques of this sort have emerged from scholars such as Sara Castro-Klarén, who have felt that rethinking the Atlantic space as posttheoretical means an unnecessary dismissal of omnipresent structures of power from our analyses. For her, this move would ignore the very structures of power in the Atlantic world that shape it:

> hablar de post-nacional o post-disciplinario no quiere decir que el Estado-nación o los conocimientos interdisciplinarios hayan perdido terreno, legitimación o poder, hasta tal punto que ya no sean operativos, valiosos o indispensables. Por el contrario: ambas, la nación y las disciplinas, se mantienen firmemente en su lugar.
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> [Speaking of the postnational or postdisciplinary does not mean that the nation-state or interdisciplinary knowledges have lost ground, legitimation, or power to such a degree that they are no longer operating, valid, or indispensable. On the contrary: both, the nation and the disciplines, remain firmly in place.] (105)

Similarly, Joan Ramon Resina has argued from an Iberian perspective that globalization's reconfiguration of traditional political patterns does not diminish the nation's role; it "resituates it in relation to other forms of political-geographical integration" ("Scale of the Nation" 54). Castro-Klarén and Resina have both used this argument to illustrate the complexity of local and transatlantic political processes, a critique of what they view as overly simplistic attempts to compare Spain to Latin America. For my part, I agree that the nation remains a force to be contended with. Paradoxically, though, emphasizing too strongly how its structures of power remain firmly in place may preclude us from recognizing, from a temporal perspective, the *moments* of simultaneous inscription and dissonance in which those systems hail, but do not fully inscribe, the subjects they address. In other words, it is possible to think the Atlantic as beyond, or as a challenge to, nation, while still recognizing the central role nation plays in everyday life.

Moreover, while thinking the Atlantic space through the lenses of nation and imperialism is useful for understanding certain economic and political dynamics, if they are too broadly applied, such assertions run the risk of conflating a diachronic historical scope with a synchronic theoretical approach. The effect is to universalize—and homogenize—both the space of the Atlantic and the experience of the everyday Atlantic subject. Such an approach negates the multiple ways in which a subject of various knowledges changes over time, as well as the multiple overlapping of identities that shapes him or her on a daily basis. How coloniality or globalization plays out on a daily basis within national sites of power, moreover, is not uniformly applicable to the wider Ibero-American Atlantic as a daily process; empire is located in a variety of structures, attitudes, and practices that shift from place to place and moment to moment. As Brad Epps has suggested, the colonial enterprise is always plurinational, not just national ("Al sur" 127). At the same time, imperialism itself is theorized, implemented, and experienced differently in each local area.

That is because, as systems, (neo)colonialism, the nation-state, and globalization imply different ideas and practices within the overarching imperial epistemology of power with which they are mistakenly conflated. As Hardt and Negri have pointed out, critical epistemes like imperialism and empire are first and foremost a reflection of the time in which they are produced: in the case of the twentieth-century Atlantic, empire and imperialism are largely products of the postmodern and poststructuralist theories of identity and subjectivity that also made postcolonial theory possible (*Empire* xiii–xiv). Despite this recognition, however, while Hardt and Negri claim that imperialism is over historically, they go on to affirm the dominance of empire as a concept because it subscribes to an arch-temporality that exceeds history: "the concept of Empire presents itself not as a historical regime originating in conquest, but rather as an order that effectively suspends history and thereby fixes the existing state of affairs for eternity. From the perspective of Empire, this is the way things will always be and the way they were always meant to be. In other words, Empire presents its rule not as a transitory moment in the movement of history, but as a regime with no temporal boundaries and in this sense outside of history or at the end of history" (xiv-xv). This is the understanding of power that underlies the assertion that the Atlantic space is always imperial. Whether it is called imperialism or empire, homogenizing the daily subject by using a critical discourse that insists on the omnipotence of a five-hundred-year imaginary, though, masks the multiple ways in which current global capital circulates in quite different forms from those that took place in 1492. What is considered imperial changes over time and gains or loses strength *as* an epistemic concept depending on the moment in which the concept is thought. For instance, following the war of 1898 several politicians and essayists in Catalonia sought to recreate imperialism as a cultural, rather than economic or political, value. Catalonia had long been the financial center of the colonial relationship to Cuba, but it was simultaneously disenfranchised within Spanish politics, a fact that highlights the conflicting aspects of imperialism as an economic practice and a political imaginary. Newly invoking the possibility of empire was meant to reorganize the Iberian Peninsula in ways that inverted the centrality of Madrid in Spain. As Joan Ramon Resina has pointed out, however, the Catalan gesture to create its own, new imperialism was often just that—a gesture meant to draw attention to local/national issues concerned with Catalonia and a perceived lack of federalism within Spain; it was not necessarily a call for renewed imperial economic power (*Del hispanismo* 32).

By contrast, the term "imperial" today is often levied against economic practices that reflect the global capitalism that is prevalent throughout the world, at the same time as imperialism's imagined value extends into the circulation not just of goods and capital, but of ideas that reflect dominant, usually Western, epistemological stances. Today's consolidation of the publishing market in Spain and Latin America by a few multinational companies, for instance, offers varying notions of what it means to "colonize" a space of knowledge. Anagrama (an independent publisher), has been accused of being overly peninsular in its translations of other-language works into Spanish, because its Spanish is often that of mainland Spain. In addition to ignoring the regional differences within the Peninsula that make such an assertion highly overgeneralized, this critique primarily associates language with (imperial) power. Alfaguara (owned by the Grupo Santillana) has, on the other hand, usually maintained a separation between the products it sells from country to country, producing a different kind of local-global structure that distributes wealth to Spain while segregating the kinds of knowledge that are distributed from nation to nation. The language may not be a problem, but the model funnels money from local sales to a central locus in Europe. At the same time, Grupo Planeta, based in Barcelona—which owns not just numerous publishing houses, but also television stations, newspapers, and internet providers throughout Spain and Latin America—consolidates multiple branches of information into a single globalized structure of economic distribution. The impact of the Eurozone on Spain, however, recently marked by agitations by Catalan separatists who wish to hold their own place in a European Union reluctant to accept them, reframes the notion that Planeta is simply capable of imposing economic or cultural dominance on Latin America from Spain. Not only is it forced to choose between two possible nations to house its firm, but the nations themselves must take into account how industries would react to new borders being drawn before they can even decide whether to separate or, in Spain's case, back Catalonia's bid for independence in a way that would encourage the European Union to support it.[8] Here the octopus-like structure of power that unfolds in various markets suggests that imperialism is evident not just in the consolidation of the communications industry by the multinational firm, but also in the tax structures imposed on Catalonia from Madrid and the distribution of wealth by members of the European Union, such as Germany, who hold sway over decisions regarding national sovereignty. The different means of production and distribution of knowledge and power these examples illustrate in the twenty-first century cannot be conflated with the post-1898 Catalan case for imperialism I cited above.

Nor do they coincide with the pre-independence examples of Spanish imperialism in Latin America, unless we recognize that what is at stake are not just practices or ideologies, but epistemologies of power.

By this I mean that it is the *epistemology* of imperialism that we presume is shared over time, even though in its individual manifestations imperialism and empire both reveal quite different understandings of self and community. This is the case prior to 1898 as well. Portuguese imperialism in Brazil was never quite what it was in the Spanish colonies, especially once the locus of power of the empire relocated to Rio de Janeiro in 1808. Similarly, the actions of early Portuguese colonists who were focused primarily on the extraction of products and less on settlement in Brazil cannot be conflated with the development projects in Latin America today that take the form of USAID and other North American funding channels, because the contemporary networks of distribution have changed the old Europe/metropolis-America/colony binarism. Thinking together, in a meanwhile fashion, the alternatives to the Spanish empire such as the one envisioned by Catalan postcolonial nationalism; globalization centered in different industries and geographical areas; or the entire Luso-Brazilian and Spanish systems of imperialism, then, reveals the limitations of a universalizing term like "imperialism" as a singular concept. The same is true, as I show below, for assumptions that the nation-state can be theorized in similar ways across a broad transatlantic context.

Universalizing the Atlantic space through the notion of imperialism or even through the presumed homogeneity of the nation-state as a structure and an imaginary assumes that there is a single epistemology of power at play over time, one that elides important conceptual and practiced *moments* of difference in the process. To continue using these terms in the same way while speaking of the everyday Atlantic is to continue to reproduce the conceptual hegemony of colonial power as an epistemology. This approach leaves little to no space for movement away from the constrictions of ideology and discursivity, and ignores the simultaneity of the many kinds of knowledge coexisting in a subject's engagement with the Atlantic world from day to day, from moment to moment.[9] Richard Serrano has also signaled the paradox in scholarly paradigms that seek to totalize critical approaches in this way: "The sun never set on the British Empire, but Postcolonial Studies has essentially made the entire planet and its entire history its domain" (3). Although

Serrano is likely too harsh in his outright repudiation of the postcolonial studies model, I would agree that the unifying gesture of viewing daily thought as always-already imperial or determined by the nation-state could potentially limit, rather than aid in, the production of a new methodology for understanding the multiple flows of knowledge, power, and culture that are evident in the space and that are reflected daily in the newspaper chronicle and blog. After all, one could also argue that, as a critical perspective, delineating the Atlantic space as imperial actually privileges a Eurocentric epistemology by reasserting the *conceptual* hegemony of imperialism over literary criticism and subjugating Latin America once again to a position of otherness with respect to a Westernized epistemology or hierarchy and power. As Ania Loomba has perhaps more convincingly argued:

> Imperialism hijacked millions of people across the world away from local processes and into a world in which capitalist Europe pioneered the single coercive script of historical transformation, but the historical record is also replete with coruscating instances of alternative visions of human and social betterment. These are the visions that postcolonial historians must also pay attention to as we analyze the material and ideological foundations of imperial power. (13)

Within this framework it is possible to reconsider subjects of the everyday Atlantic world as palimpsestic, engaged at times—but not consistently—with certain discourses and practices of power that change daily.

In order to rethink this critical tendency to rely on a singular epistemology to understand subjectivity and community across a wide geographical space, then, it is important to consider not just the ideological and material constructs of power that Loomba has signaled, but also the epistemological suppositions that underlie them. It is the epistemology of a shared subjectivity that most obviously becomes inscribed in the critical consideration of the Atlantic as imperial. To that end, Aníbal Quijano has shown that the colonization of power has its roots in Western philosophical thought. In this way, he locates the hegemonic epistemological connection between colonialism and modernity in the construction of subjectivity as rational. He argues that (post)colonial hegemony is rooted specifically in the perceived relationship between self and other that is the Eurocentric cornerstone of Western thought from the fifteenth century on:

> And such inequalities are perceived as being of nature: only European culture is rational, it can contain "subjects"—the rest are not rational, they cannot be or harbor "subjects." As a consequence, the other cultures are different in the sense that they are unequal, in fact inferior, by nature. They only can be "objects" of knowledge or /and of domination practices. From that perspective, the relation between European culture and the other cultures was established and has been maintained, as a relation between "subject" and "object." It blocked, therefore, every relation of communication, of interchange of knowledge and of modes of producing knowledge between the cultures, since the paradigm implies that between "subject" and "object" there can be but a relation of externality. Such a mental perspective, enduring as practice for five hundred years, could only have been the product of a relation of coloniality between Europe and the rest of the world. In other terms, the European paradigm of rational knowledge was not only elaborated in the context of, but as part of, a power structure that involved the European colonial domination over the rest of the world. This paradigm expressed, in a demonstrable sense, the coloniality of that power structure. (174)

Quijano focuses on how the subject is produced through an objectification of the colonized other, and how that structure of thought serves as the epistemological apparatus of support for colonialism and, its flip side, modernity. This approach is instructive because it explains how the intersubjective relationship between self and other, in the form of knowledge and power, maintains a hierarchical structure. Paradoxically, though, this sort of hierarchical thought continues in critical approaches that seek to impose a singular form of epistemology on critical considerations of the Atlantic space when they view it as transhistorically imperialized or determined by the nation-state. Recognizing the subject-object distinction as the primary construct used to shore up Eurocentric colonialities of power means that critical approaches seeking to move beyond coloniality or nation need to consider epistemes that do not continue in that vein or that are formulated outside a Eurocentric geopolitics of knowledge.[10]

Notably this means not rethinking power through geography, but through challenges to the rational epistemology that underlies Western thought. The Iberian and Latin American chronicle incorporates both an adoption of, and potential challenge to, the Eurocentric model of thought that underlies colonialities of power by including daily knowledges that are corporeal and affective, as well as ideological or philosophical, into the very newspapers that seek to create just such a hierarchical representation of reported knowledge as objective and scientific. If we focus on the nation-state as just one example of how an imagined, rational epistemology of coloniality maintains a structure of power in society, we can see how on a daily basis that perspective is eroded from within—if only momentarily—by the simultaneity through which the *crónica* represents subjectivity, knowledge, and power as palimpsestic and therefore "beyond" nation, imperialism, and rationality. Reasserting the roles of multiplicity and simultaneity as the meanwhile approach does challenges as well our own critical rationality, as we consider how power manifests in other ways on a daily basis.

Meanwhile time is important, because it makes impossible the imposition of a singular, yet binarily conceived, imaginary over a space of subjects. Speaking not of postcolonialism or nation, but of globalization, Doreen Massey has pointed out in her book *For Space* that globalization is only one imaginary that can be applied to geographical relationships and, moreover, that the discourse on globalization is part of its production. Talking about a certain phenomenon, repeating discourses about it, no matter how contradictory they may be, ultimately produces the imaginary that makes that phenomenon possible as such (84). I would suggest that the same is true of the postcolonial, imperial, and national imaginaries, which have become the predominant lenses through which critics view relationships in the Atlantic world. Initially created and maintained by discourses of colonization to describe a legal and economic system, and later reappropriated by Latin American scholars to denounce the impact of modernity and globalization, this very language has influenced the way in which we approach subjectivity. Today, although imbalances of power, unequal distribution of wealth, and ideological practices of inscription into global capitalism remain, imperialism itself serves primarily as a *critical* imaginary of power as hierarchical.[11]

We can, then, consider critical attention to imperialism, like nation, as fundamentally an imagined concept that is perpetuated by a critical acceptance of the underlying Western epistemology as the basis for structuring our arguments of power as hierarchical. Though Massey eventually goes on to reassert the impossibility of breaking out of such a powerful framework as globalization, thinking about imperialism from a similar perspective of it as imaginary, I wonder what would happen if we began to talk about the relationships between literary or journalistic texts, as both products and producers of subjective epistemologies, in a different way. What happens, for instance, if we begin to seek connections among Latin America, the United States, Europe, and Africa that are not imagined as global or postcolonial, but that are, instead, part of a broader, yet uneven, everyday Atlantic, where this Atlantic represents a whole new approach to knowledge as always ephemeral, simultaneous, and in movement? This does not mean ignoring the very real effects of (post)colonialism or globalization, but viewing them as just a couple of the many options that are available for *thinking* about subjectivity through the kinds of knowledges implicit in the meanwhile reading moment in which the palimpsestic subject engages daily.

Especially when they are taken together, these different ways of knowing—for instance, corporeal, ideological, ethical, affective, or virtual approximations of identity—create a palimpsestic notion of subjectivity. This, in turn, poses a challenge not only to literary studies that root analyses of subjectivity in strictly national contexts, but also to attempts to subsume knowledge of the subject to any single theoretical paradigm. In contrast, constricting our analyses of subjectivity to a single theoretical lens reasserts a hegemonic, totalizing epistemology of "non-time" over our understanding of how individuals and communities interact daily.

Indeed, few transatlantic approaches consider the role of time in the production of subjectivity; they prefer to view thought as a constant over half a millennium. While from a material perspective this approach may be valid for describing the consistent ill effects of colonization, modernity, and globalization over colonies, communities, and nation-states writ large, thinking the Atlantic as inherently imperial implies what I call a non-time, because all time is taken to be the same. Julio Ortega suggests as much when he defines the transatlantic field as comprised of a singular "transhistoric time": "Por ello, esta lectura da cuenta más que de un tiempo histórico de un tiempo trans-histórico, entrecruzado de relatos una y otra vez actualizados [For that reason, this reading takes into account more a trans-historical time, crossed by narratives that are renewed over and over again, than a historical time]" (84).

The short temporality of the chronicles' daily representations of power, identity, and subjectivity, however, allows us to think about the everyday Atlantic as a unique theoretical field of study that is not just imperial or postcolonial, nor ruled solely by national structures of power, but also decentered and deterritorialized daily by everyday thinking subjects. By taking meanwhile time in particular into account, we can see that not all of the Atlantic space is defined by what Benedict Anderson (following Walter Benjamin) had called a "homogenous empty time," but rather a multiplicity of times and knowledges that come together only momentarily. As Iain Chambers has suggested, "In [the oceanic] space, composed of the sedimented traces of uncharted histories, a hegemonic temporality intersects with other times, with the times of others, through bodies [. . .] We are brought into the presence of a contingent, temporal relation and into the multiplicity of the present, which is irreducible to its representation" (682).[12] Thinking about subjectivity through the lens of meanwhile time as simultaneity and ephemerality, as I do here, complicates the idea of hierarchy on which nation and empire are based and makes possible other ways of knowing subjectivity and community in the Atlantic space. It also ruptures material or ideological constructs of power that would otherwise view the Atlantic as always already imposing a hegemonic time over Atlantic subjects.

The daily and weekly ways in which the chronicle addresses knowledge and subjectivity show that *thinking* the Ibero-American Atlantic as a static place of imperialism or empire from 1492 until today is too homogenizing an approach for considering the epistemological and lived diversity that encompasses relations of power within and among subjects living in different communities around the Atlantic world. The temporality and movement of the newspaper chronicle place it in contact with, but not under, the structure of logic that rational and imperializing post-Enlightenment concepts of subjectivity project. This is the case both in terms of the writing, publishing, and reading practices that make it such a flexible genre, and in its tendency to place contradictory experiences and expressions alongside one another without logically explaining these contradictions. It is for that reason, for instance, that Eugeni d'Ors can insist that the "supreme journalist" can be in Pyongyang and Les Rambles at the same time, offering an alternative viewpoint to the more realist testimonies depicted elsewhere. Likewise, Germán Arciniegas can insist that looking at a photograph of sculptures will ethically unite a viewer with Colombia's long-erased indigenous past. Chronicles—and, later, blogs—take apart the rational self-other distinction on which a Western philosophy of coloniality and modernity is based by supplementing it with other, nonrational and temporary, ways of knowing. In the process, these multiple and simultaneous epistemologies reveal themselves to be produced in contact with Western epistemologies of urban, national, imperial, and global subjectivity, but never quite constrained by them.

What needs to be taken into account, then, is how the individual subject moving daily through an Atlantic space experiences his or her relationship to community and the various imaginaries that circulate through it. Indeed, if we return simultaneously to the idea of the inscription of subject-as-self into the colonizing system through "un efecto imaginario de un sistema atlántico imperialista [an imaginary effect of an imperial Atlantic system]" (Merediz and Gerassi-Navarro) and Quijano's assertion that the subject-object distinction blocks relations or interchanges of communication and knowledge, we may notice two contradictory but complementary arguments. Quijano's rational subject (which is really the European thinking subject proposed by Descartes) is founded in a concept of dual singularity: there is a subject and there is an other. The imaginary to which Merediz and Gerassi-Navarro refer, on the other hand, remits to the question of "imagined communities" posited several decades ago by Benedict Anderson with respect to nation. Anderson's concept of nation is also singular; nation is always defined by an imagined community, and for each nation, there is an ideal imaginary. Though problematic in the homogeneity Anderson ascribes to it, this concept of imagined community could allow for pluralism in a way that the idea of the singular rational subject does not. Understanding the relationship between subjectivity and power as a not-always-rational, not-always-discursive epistemological construct presents a more complicated and plural approach to understanding the subject and the community *at the same time*. What is at stake is not only a Western philosophical definition of the subject vis-à-vis the other, or even a submission of the subject to an ideal imaginary of empire, nation, modernity, or globalization. There are also daily inscriptions of this individual subject into the multiple, coexisting and ever-changing communal imaginaries and the multiple intersubjective relationships such social structures imply.

Epistemologies, as well as practices, of power, then, are included in the meanwhile reading that the chronicle and the blog create daily when they circulate knowledge in new contexts and rewrite the overlapping borders of community in new ways. From a critical perspective, meanwhile reading means recognizing precisely the temporality of these various reading moments and their effects on thinking about the subject of knowledge in the everyday Atlantic world. It also means recognizing the complexity of power and subjectivity that is in flux in any newspaper representation and suggests that comparative readings of the Atlantic should take a new methodological approach based on that idea. Any unifying approach to the Atlantic ignores not only the daily, local complexities that are always in flux in the ever-changing political and social communities that make up a single state, but also the present reading moment in which a literary critic produces her own readings about them. What we need, then, is to push the boundaries of critical thought in such a way that imperialism and hierarchy are no longer the driving perspective for the study of the everyday Atlantic, even while we recognize the centrality of their effects on material and ideological structures of power as they are produced daily. The question that remains, then, is what the field of Ibero-American Atlantic studies, thought in terms of a simultaneity, rather than hierarchy, of epistemologies, would look like.

SIMULTANEOUS TIME AND MEANWHILE READING

Remaining constricted by a Eurocentric, rational notion of subjectivity or by non-time, whether or not it is figured as hegemonic, means the idea of the everyday Atlantic loses the openness that the theoretical notion of space implies: it becomes once again a territory onto which a Western or otherwise imperialized, globalized, or national paradigm can be mapped. One alternative to this closure is to recognize the multiplicity and ephemerality of various contexts and systems in flux that make the everyday Atlantic a moving space of competing abstract and material understandings of what power means. Competing representations collide at different points in history, and also in different literary manifestations, on a daily basis. The kaleidoscopic effect of these intersections is to *momentarily* produce a matrix of conceptualized power, but also to deconstruct any seemingly stable imaginary or practice of that power over time, since the multiple epistemological expressions of it are always changing.[13] To appropriate Deleuze and Guattari for a moment, the chronicle and blog that perform these intersections therefore reflect and intersect with material daily life as would "a model that is perpetually in construction or collapsing, and of a process that is perpetually prolonging itself, breaking off and starting up again" (20).

Implicit in the idea of meanwhile reading I have been elaborating here is the concept of time it implies. Temporality has figured prominently in previous understandings of identity that have favored a more homogenizing notion of community. Benedict Anderson was the first to describe the existence of an imagined community and its relationship to time within the context of print culture. He claimed the homogeneity of national identity was rooted in the distribution of newspapers among subjects within a certain geographical region who, through reading them, became tied together as a nation.[14] Notably, Anderson bases this national construction of identity on the concept of "meanwhile," which he identifies as a post-Enlightenment structure of thought by which rational subjects understand that something happening in their immediate vicinity is occurring simultaneously with many other events in other places: "simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (24). Yet, as Homi Bhabha has written of Anderson's concept, it is problematic because it makes the pulsing, momentary nature of language into "a narrative of synchrony" rather than one that accepts contradiction and multiplicity (309). Moreover, what Anderson leaves out of his description of time—which, in point of fact, he comes to through a reading *not* of journalism, but of realist novels—is that the concept of meanwhile always extends both deeper into and beyond the limits of an imagined national community. This is so particularly when the newspaper is the text in question, since it juggles representations of multiple local, regional, national, and global communities at once. Moreover, although the meanwhiles of realist literary discourse reflect a material understanding of daily life—the simultaneity of material actions in infinite personal and communal realms—the shift from newspaper to book and back again that Anderson's concept of time needs in order to function as the root of the nation is incomplete. His idea of imagined national communities does