

The De-colonization of Latin American Studies  
and its Connections with American Studies

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# I. Scholar Context

# Comparative Literature/Idea of Literature

[Post WW II]

'New Criticism' [1950s]

(*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1936)



Revision of XIXth  
century terms and ideas  
(sociological context,  
comparative studies)

Influence in  
Latin America

Literature/Authorship

[Style]

Example: P. Neruda  
(1904-1973)

Literature and  
journalism

Example: J. Martí  
(1853-1895)

Scientific Narration/  
Science Fiction

Example: H.  
Oesterheld  
(1919-1977)

Idea of travel  
writing

Example: D. F.  
Sarmiento (1811-  
1888)

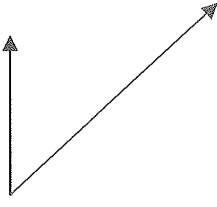
## From 'New Criticism' in Latin America (academics and writers)

- Absence of biographical justifications or appeal to biographical narrations.
- Absence of extra-textual situations and materials as legitimate explanation.
- Close reading. Autonomy of the text.
- English as literary language.



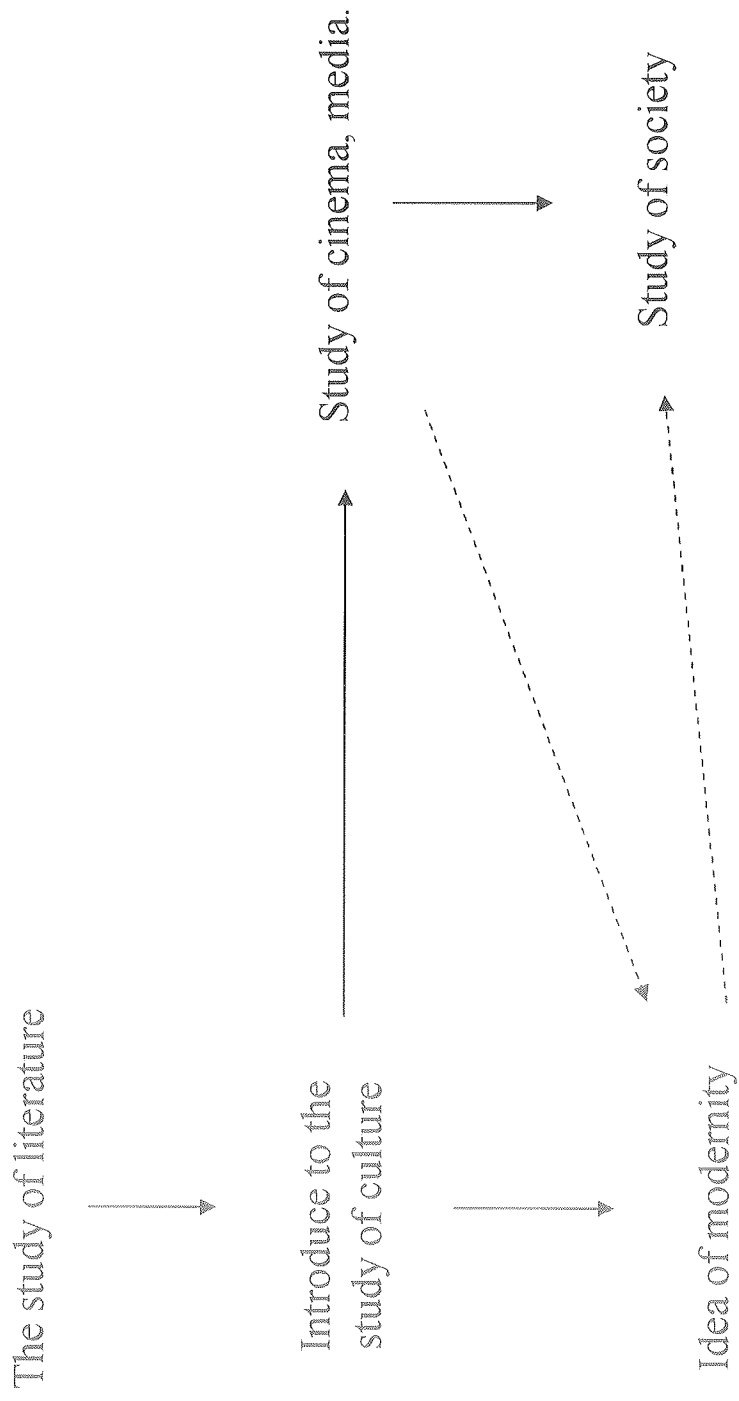
Impact on the style of writing but also on the idea of 'comparative elements' and authorship in Latin America

J. L. Borges (1899-1986)

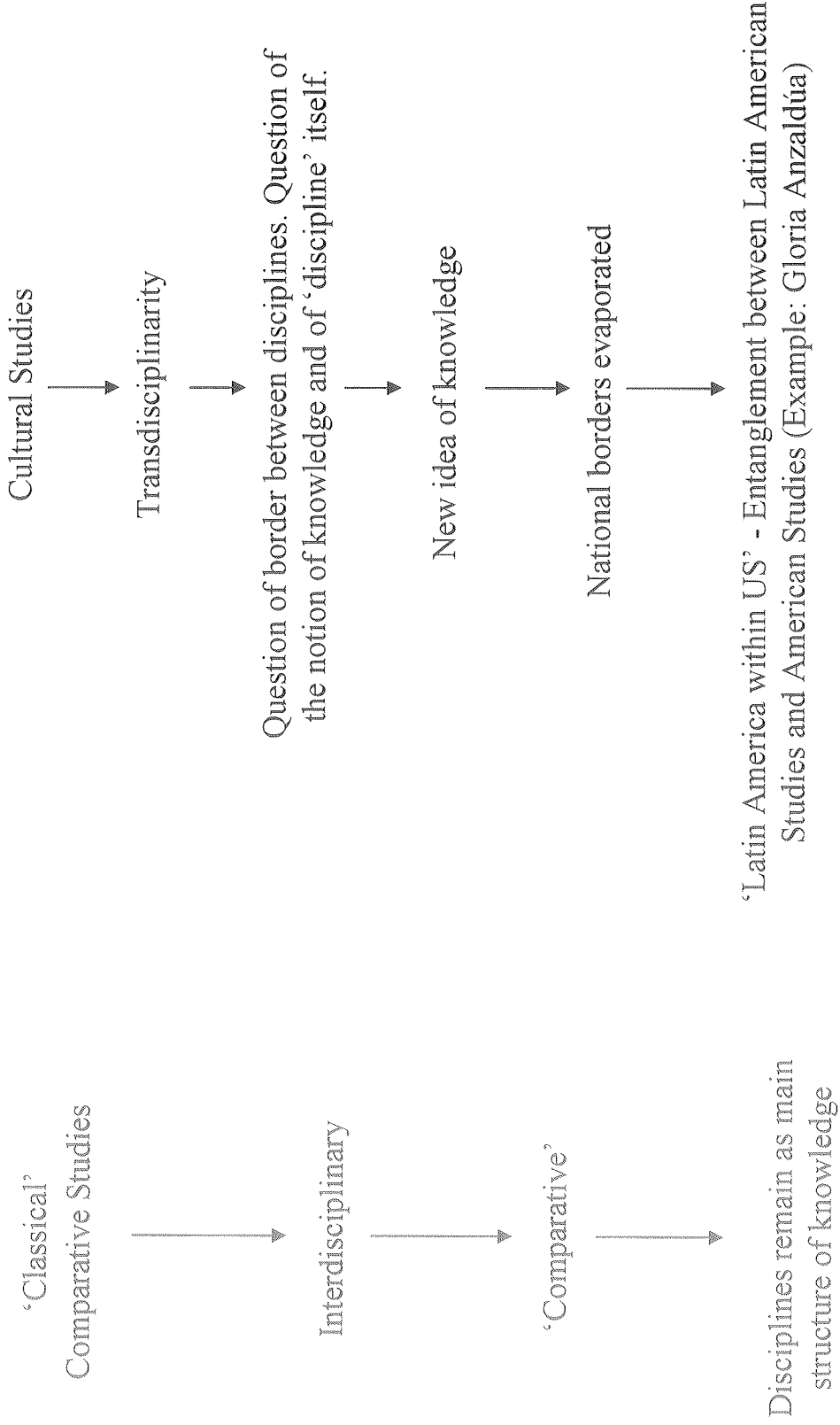


Authors living and developing they  
'authorship' in U.S. Example: J.  
Martí.

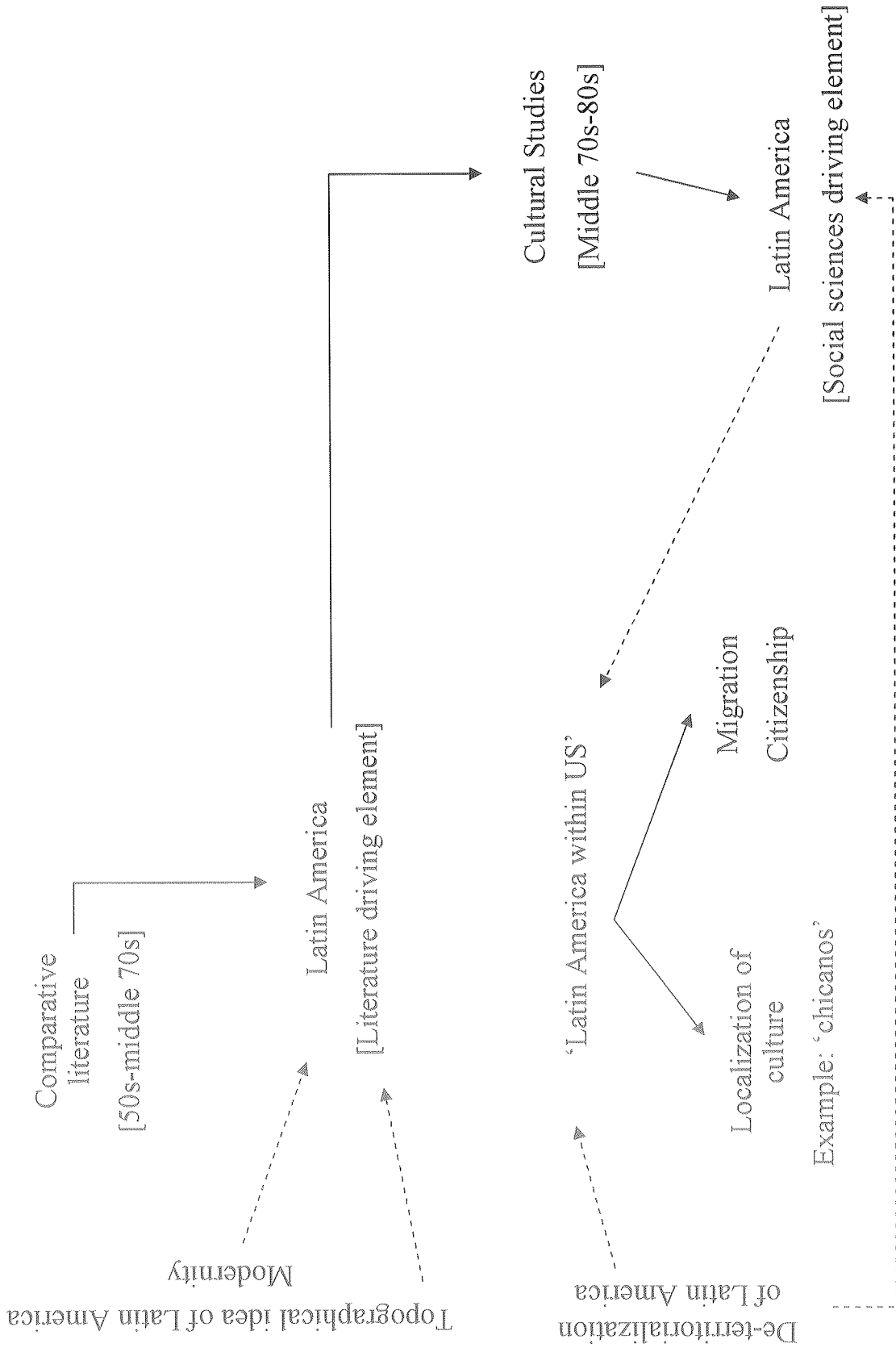
‘American Experience’  
XIX Century



Influence of American Studies in  
Comparative Studies and in Cultural Studies (1970s and 1980s)

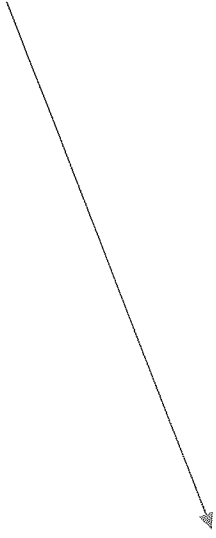


# 'Cultures of Scholarship'



## The Borderland

If we accept that ‘American Studies’ is a phenomena that partially is connected with ‘British’ cultural studies, that is, with the fact in part the “American Studies’ are a UK product, then



The connection with Latin American Studies is direct as them are also a product mostly generated within the US/Europe academia and then exported to South America.



## Borderland/‘Border Thinking’

“I would say that the transdisciplinary dimension of border thinking is cultural critique in the precise sense that Stuart Hall define cultural studies, as transdisciplinary and transnational: ‘In the sense, if there is anything to be learnt from British cultural studies, it’s the insistence that cultural studies is always about the articulation -in different context of course- between culture and power. I am speaking in terms of the epistemological formation of the field, not in in the sense of practicing cultural studies.’ (Hall 1992, 395).”

Source: Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, 327).

## Francois Cusset's Theory - Pattern

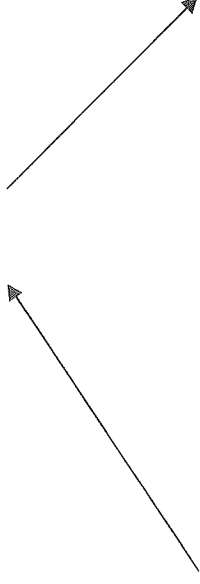
[*French Theory. Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003)]

‘Comparative Literature’  
within US universities  
[institutional sense]



Why the French-European philosophers found their place in US universities within Comparative Literature programs and not within philosophy Departments?

‘French Theory’



‘Science-socialization’  
of literature and/or  
humanities



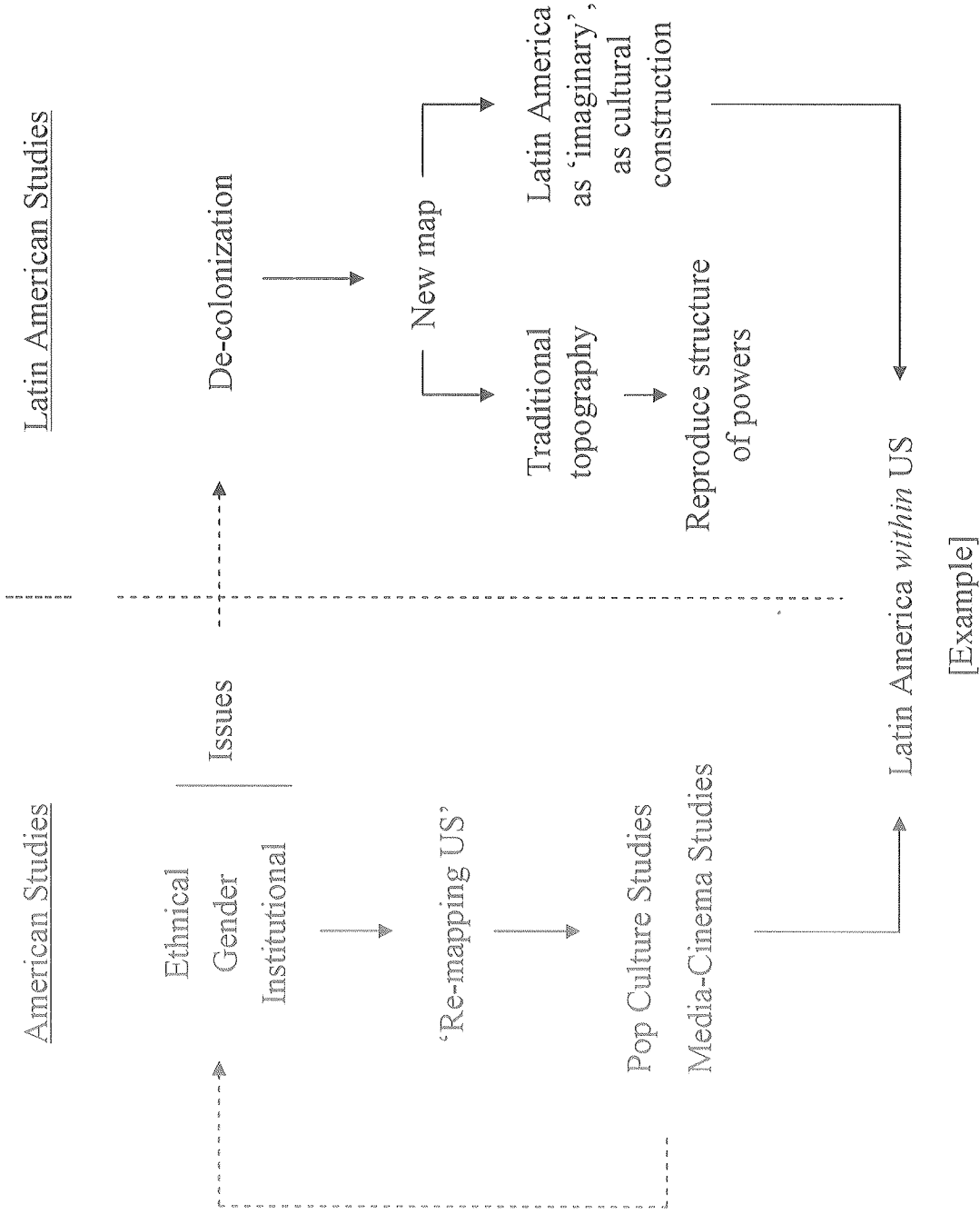
Why Latin America authors that developed the idea ‘de-territorialized version’ of Latin America found their place more within the Latin American programs in US academia than within South American institutions?



Influence in Latin  
America

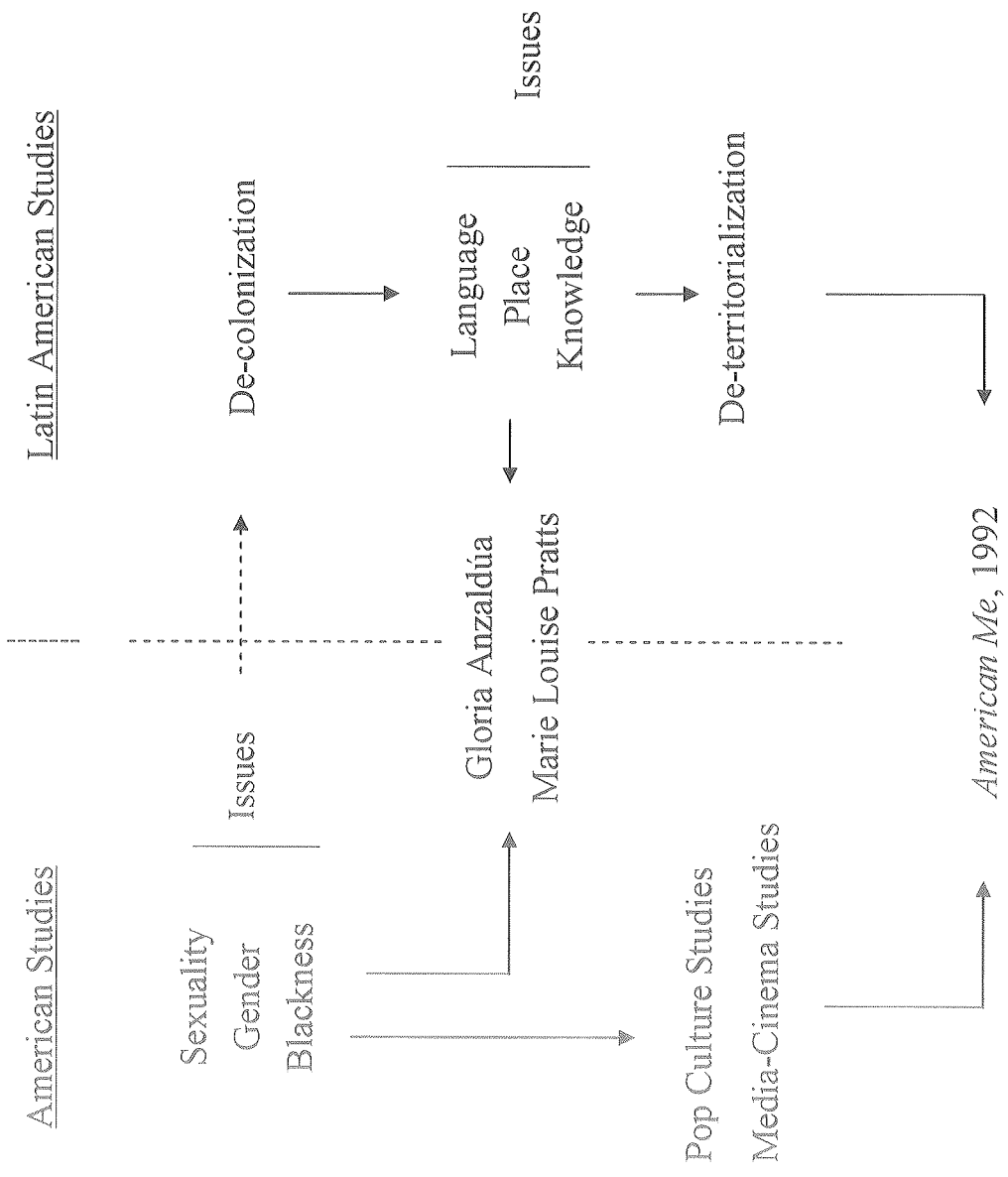
# Imaginary Homelands

[1960s/1970s]



# Imaginary Countries/Nations

[1960s/1980s]



'Between two waters'

Colonization  
----->

Peripheral  
Western  
[Latin  
America]

Western  
Culture

Aborigine Dimension

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'From culture to language'  
(Enlightenment perspective)

Quechua  
Aymará

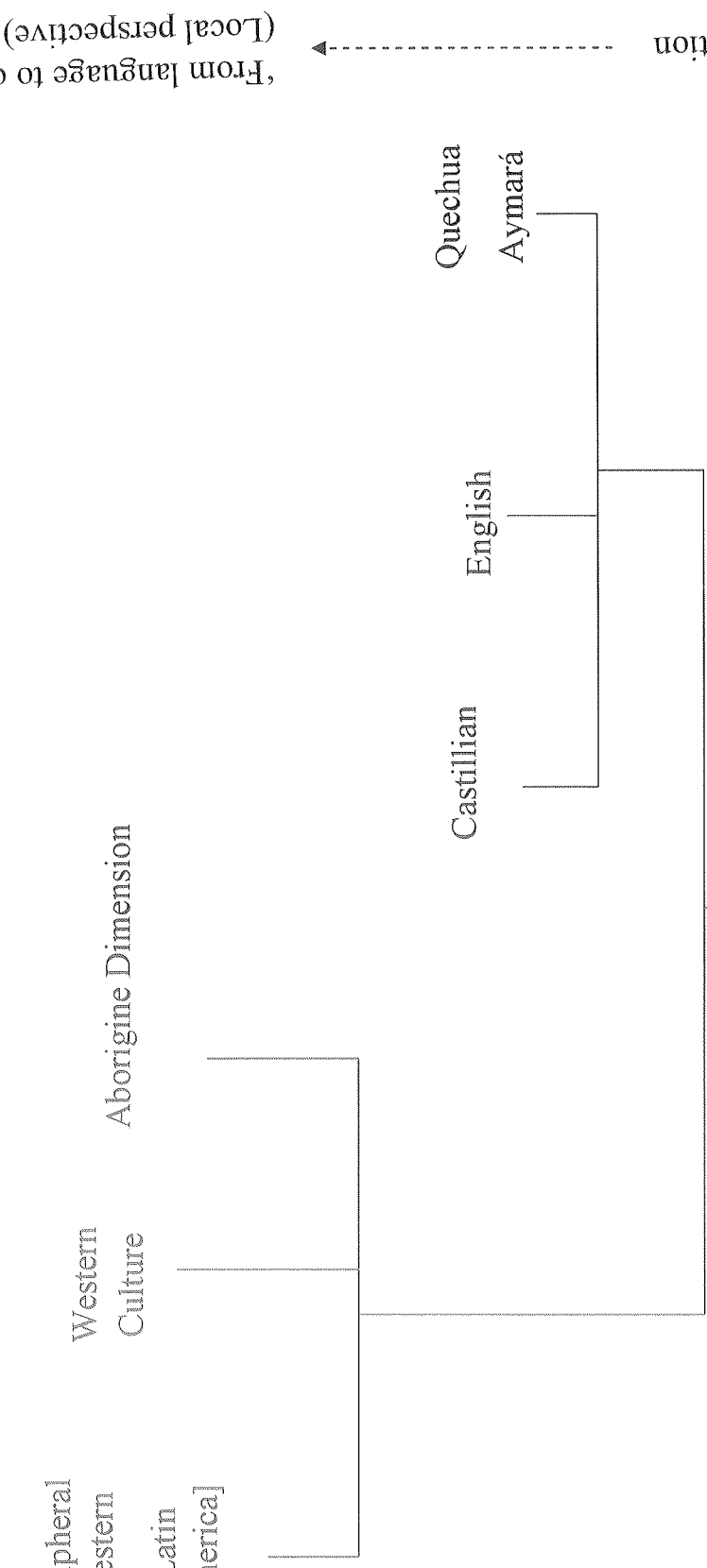
English

Castillian

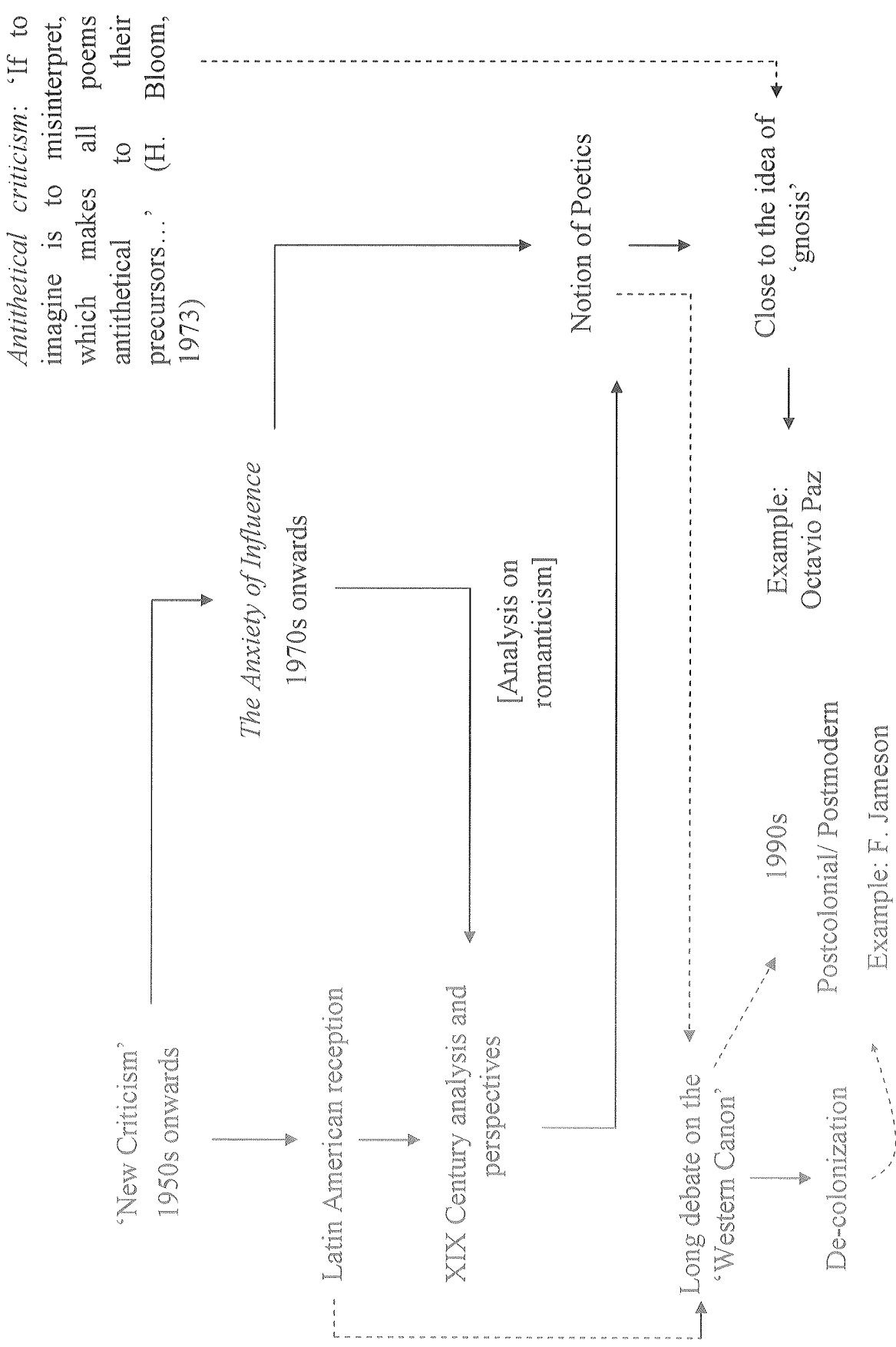
[Author]  
Gloria Anzaldúa

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'From language to community'  
(Local perspective)

De-colonization



# 'Deriva' / Drift [sample]



## II. Socio-historical Context

## General comparison

Latin America		Reception of American Studies within South America
Historical evolution	Intellectual/ Conceptual Dimension	
Pre-colonial period	Idea of writing	English as literary language
Colonial period	Travel Scientific exploration	Travel writing
Independence	Autonomy First Literature Identity	New readings of F. Cooper and H.D. Thoreau. Literature and Nationalism.
State development	Territory Education	Geography and education
Capitalist insertion	Society Ideology Modernity	Welfare State Faulkner, D. H. Salinger
Post-colonial	Language Location of Knowledge	Localization - Bhabha Urbanism F. Jameson