

**The World is Flat**

By Papo Colo, 1984

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*(Essay/poem for the exhibition "Images of the New World")*

*Intar, New York*

I

Chance is the machinery of history/  
like poetry to art.  
In this poetic event that was  
The Discovery,  
three ships  
that small investment to instinct  
to be mistaken  
A gift/ like an act of magic  
gave the Golden Age to Spain/  
gave them an empire.  
One that extended from South America/  
the Caribbean islands/North America.  
The Discovery/by accident/  
result in the splendor of power.

II

To Europe it gave  
the pipes of expansion.  
Power was increasing with power.  
One/ very strong/ Language  
was born with us.  
The conquest - an epic fact -  
and the conquerors conquered.

III

Blood  
is the cement of empires.  
The New World  
militarized greed/  
gave to religion  
another vital engine/  
divided the New World into two  
the English/ the Spanish  
North/ South.

IV

Always/ war/ exists.  
England - Spain/or vice versa

from before/ from religions  
the dominators of the sea/  
that came from heaven.

The first letter of Columbus to the  
King and Queen of Spain announcing  
the discovery of the New World:

"...they all believe that power and goodness are in the sky, and they believed firmly that I, with these ships and crews came from the sky...And this comes not because they are ignorant: on the contrary, they are men of subtle wit, who navigate all those seas... but because they never saw men wearing clothes nor the like of our ships...And as soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island that I found, I took some of them by force to the intent that they should learn (our speech) and give me information of what there was in these parts...To this day I carry them with me who are still of the opinion that I come from heaven...and they are the first to proclaim it whenever I arrived and the others went running from house to house and to the neighboring villages, with loud cries of "COME! COME TO SEE THE PEOPLE FROM HEAVEN!"

V

And they were swallowed  
by the new land/  
and reproduce till today,  
Still North and South.

America/ by the magic existence  
of chance.

(Brazil, like a forgotten son/  
a giant unicorn/ grandson of Portugal.

History burns

Mississippi/ Amazon

continent currents

2 symbols/ 2 currents

One permanence.

VI

Before all this/  
the world was flat.

They feared the existence of monsters  
and when they reached the borders  
they would fall into the void  
like a ripe avocado.

The earth stood still/  
and the sun was mobile  
and there yet existed  
millions of humans as yet  
undiscovered.

The exposure of this secret  
completed the circle/  
circumnavigated the idea.

Another race was born  
the new from the old/  
naturally in conflict  
North/South  
Americans.

## VII

Africa became enslaved  
(like the name of a woman)  
In the color black  
exists/ all the colors  
In reality, the sky is black  
the culmination of America/  
the mixture.  
And the natural sons?  
they became de-naturalized  
And the European wind provided  
the tempest  
and the ecstasies of their extermination  
never was accomplished.  
The Indians, called that  
by mistake, are still here  
despite the many holocausts.

## VIII

Geography perforates  
the new landscape  
into the human mind/ this change  
the form of seeing the world/  
the broken point  
from the medieval visuality  
to the unknown optic  
Curiosity/ Answers/ Mythologies.

## IX

The kiss was not of fire of land.  
People multiplying with the new  
landscape  
with the new form of vision/  
the sound and touch of the objects  
different processes (North/South)  
with a single base.  
Nostalgia  
always omnipresent  
Europe/  
the great difference.  
Independence/ Division/  
Autodetermination  
Who imposed upon whom?  
Debutante settings  
for the new centers of power  
immediate monopolies of order  
an imposed aesthetic by only  
one side/  
and the visuals  
still to be discovered.  
No longer flat/ is the planet  
but the countries.