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(UN)THINKING, DECOLONIAL LOVING & BECOMING: CRITICAL LITERACIES FOR 'POSTNORMAL TIMES'

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Decolonizing Urbanism: Transformative Perspectives
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Abstract

In this talk, I make a case for an urgent process of (un)thinking science, so as to better contribute to decolonizing urbanism. I describe this (un)thinking as a kind of “conscious practical work” that enables us to move beyond Cartesian binary thinking, toward critical reading and re-writing of the word and world (Freire, 1983/1991). For example, by engaging in a womanist-feminist renegade architectural project of “critical spatial literacy” in order to read the gendered, racist and heteronormative codes that inform and are informed by the built environment, in order to decipher, contest and/or subvert them (Amoo-Adare, 2013). In this vein, I argue that (un)thinking must be a type of praxis (reflection and action/knowing and doing) that also enables our engagement in diverse and multiple forms of “decolonial love” (Sandoval, 2000; Craun, 2013); including an “academics of the heart” (Rendon, 2000) and other pedagogical practices that are necessary to thrive as scholars, activists, artists, and/or educators who are interested in fomenting social and cognitive justice (Santos, 2014) as part of our daily work, while we simultaneously transgress knowledge boundaries, co-construct threshold theories (Keating, 2013), thus, enable a world of pluriversal (situated) knowledges and our own decolonial becomings. In so doing, we might well continue to contribute to the survival of our many precious (non)human epigenetic entanglements that struggle within what Ziauddin Sardar (2010, 2015) describes as “postnormal times”, which are comprised of chaos, complexity, contradiction and much uncertainty.

First, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Ante Bruns and the organizers of this summer university for inviting me to talk here today. Also, thanks to Dr. Karsten Schultz, Dr. Jennifer Gerends and Anja Hasselberg for facilitating my ability to be here. Much appreciated!

Today, I want to share some key messaging from an intellectual piece of work that I began during my 3-year tenure at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) – while working as a senior researcher on the Crossroads Asia project (implemented from 2011-2016). This is work that I am still in the process of writing. It is work that has relevance for notions of decolonizing urbanism, even though its focus is not on urban issues per se. More specifically, as a result of the deskbound work I have been engaged in, I call for an “(un)thinking of science” as we currently know and live it—especially within what Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) would describe as our many westernized universities.

This call is firmly situated within the many current academic debates that recognize the need for renewed approaches to scientific research; that is, approaches that are multiple, intersectional, transgressive, and potentially even open-ended. It is in a bid to join these many quests for change that I will highlight the importance of (un)thinking science, by pointing to why we need to do so, and too, by humbly providing some ideas on how we might attempt to do so. I will do the latter through turning to a range of radical concepts and approaches that include notions of decolonial loving and becoming.

In the process of making my arguments today, I will touch on a rather eclectic figuration of scholarship, resulting from my fervent engagement in a post-disciplinary desk study, or shall I say, a review of literature without borders. Many of the authors took me on numerous lines of (rhizomatic) flight by providing a variegated array of ideas; that is, differing diagnostics on multiple facets of the same complex, dynamic, epigenetically entangled, and frenzied whole that we euphemistically describe as “life on earth.” Through these authors, I highlight the ways in which we need to change how we think (and what we do) in order to be expansive in preparing for our futures and for a broader comprehension of the many realities and inequalities in the present; many of which are inheritances of rather unsavory pasts, for which we also need to make social and cognitive amends.

There are many reasons for promoting what I describe as an unthinking of science, some of which are about technical considerations and others being more politically motivated. But the first argument I shall present is around the question of mobility and the uneven geographies of the globe. More specifically, we witness the many unexpected results of increasing mobility of people goods, capital and ideas (Urry, 2007). And it is this fluidity that no longer justifies a division of the world in territorially fixed ‘areas’, defined by certain predictable character traits. This, is why Willem van Schendel (2002), a professor of modern Asian history, called for a move from “trait geographies” to “process geographies”. It has also been one of the rethinking challenges for Area Studies scholars as they have sought to develop concepts of ‘area’ that take these dynamisms, new interdependencies and spatial formations into account.

It is the ubiquity of people’s movement around the globe that has galvanized Continental philosopher Thomas Nail (2015) to raise questions, which center the “figure of the migrant” as a politic icon of our time; that is, one who begs us to reconsider the absurd notion that mobility is a contemporary aberration, when in fact it is the rather recent imagining of nation states that has served as the disruptive late-comer to the ever increasing mobile reality of humanity—since the first curious ‘Africans’ left the continent and populated the world. It is this historical movement and the increasing complexity of our glocal environments (Robertson, 1995) that demand

innovative forms of knowledge production about dynamic (non)human interaction processes that can only be barely understood through multiple disciplinary perspectives, as well as perhaps through a reflection on the positionality of the researcher in these processes (Mielke & Hornidge, 2014). These are both ideas that I will discuss in depth in this talk.

Furthermore, in many parts of the world nowadays, we witness the multiple effects of global capitalism in increased flows; that is, fluid epigenetically entangled (Lock 2015) networks of people, fauna, flora, places, ideas, things, etcetera (Appadurai 1999; Urry 2007; Latour 2011), plus the differential and, at times, uneven spatial development that ensues (Massey 1991, 1994). Within this dynamism, social concerns and struggles around economic, ecological and other challenges are ensnared within contentious politics, cultural becomings, spiritual beliefs, dynamic multidimensional socio-spatialities, and continuous contestations over geography, resources and knowledge (Said 1977/1995); all of which are also interwoven in and through our very complex and indeterminate time(s).

What I have just described, could also be argued to be the makings of a certain “crisis of capitalism” that Marxist geographer and anthropologist David Harvey (2010) eloquently speaks of; that is, the many failures of an unchecked neoliberal economic system that cannot suffice (or even account) for the multiple lived realities around the globe. In the same—somewhat contradictory—breath, capitalism is also said to bear the burden—if even only by implication—for the many social struggles around the globe, particularly over geography, resources and knowledge as I just mentioned. This is especially felt to be true for those who find themselves on the peripheries of trans-modernity (and its multiple fluidities); that is, people with no place within the many monetary power plays and/or pinnacles of a globalizing world, where trans-national corporations are worth more than clusters of countries and the gap between the filthy rich (the 1%) and everyone else, continues to widen exponentially.

From the field of Future Studies, Ziauddin Sardar (2015, 2010) tells us that these are certainly “postnormal times” in which we are subject to the 3Cs, “chaos, complexity and contradiction”, which not only challenge the very notion of life as we assume it to be, but also how we imagine our common futures; including how we conduct the scientific research that informs it all. In other words, we live in a multifaceted, dynamic, ambiguous and uncertain world that makes certain linear modes of thought—such as ideas of modernity, progress and development—null and void. It is for this reason that Reil Miller (2013) talks of the need for making uncertainty a core analytical aspect of a better thinking about the future, and thus too of the present; in particular, he advocates that within scientific inquiry we should strive “to use a freer anticipatory approach – the emerging discipline of anticipation – or futures literacy, which can help reduce fear of the unknown, and is a more systematic and accurate way of using the future to understand the present” (p. 107).

Similarly, Sardar and John Sweeney (2016) ask us to make uncertainty central to research, as it is often not catered for in most kinds of analysis in the social sciences. More specifically, they propose a new method for foresight and futures researchers (and practitioners), for which they outline “The Three Tomorrows of Postnormal Times”: In this, Sardar and Sweeney define the future as being comprised of 1) the surface uncertainty of an “extended present” that has largely already been colonized; 2) the shallow uncertainty of “familiar future(s)”, which are mediated by existing imaginings of the future; and 3) the deep uncertainty of “unthought future(s)”. In light of this understanding of what constitutes as the future, they argue that only collaborative creativity and ethical imagination can be used as tools to help us construct scenarios for this interactive

terrain, which is mediated by pure possibility and the many “unknown unknowns” (to coin an infamous phrase used by Donald Rumsfeld).

Additionally, Manuel Lima (2012) a specialist on data visualization (among other things) says that we are confronted with a new challenge in our mapping of an increasingly complex world, which is epitomized by the “power of networks”. More specifically, he argues that we must face and embrace a paradigm shift away from our use of the “tree metaphor”, which has primarily served to order, simplify and unify life; in that, this metaphor may have been useful in the 17th to 19th century for comprehending “problems of simplicity”, but it fails to have utility in understanding the “organized complexity” of the late 20th century (and beyond).

Instead of tree metaphors, we need to grapple with non-hierarchical, decentered and non-signifying concepts such as “rhizomes” or “networks”, for determining and deciphering the complexities of various ecosystems. For example, Lima argues that societies are “networks of people”, whose brains are “networks of neuro-cells”, which are also in turn “networks of molecules”, and so on. Additionally, networks also pervade human technology, e.g., the internet, transportation systems, power grids, etcetera. Indeed, Lima says that these key concepts apply to the mapping of multiple areas of knowledge, be that the small-scale neuro-network of a mouse or the grand-scale millennium simulation of the growth of cosmic structure and formation of galaxies. This, is why Lima talks about how Wikipedia—as one of the largest rhizomatic structures created by humankind—demonstrates the highly interconnected and networked nature of knowledge, which is in direct contrast to the linear tree-like account, or classification, of knowledge by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert’s (1751-1777) in their (French) *Encyclopédie*. The same contrast can be found in how we currently understand nature to be a “web of life”, i.e., diverse, and epigenetically entangled species—all tied together by a vast network of bacteria, as opposed to being disparate and hierarchically organized discrete life forms seated neatly upon Charles Darwin’s “tree of life”.

It is for all these reasons that we need a revised way of thinking, the paradigm shift, and perhaps even a return to a polymathic way of knowledge making. For Lima, this new mode of thinking would be a mental shift toward “network thinking”, which is basically about innovative partnerships, shared ethical and moral principles, and collective intelligence.

Another critically important reason for (un)thinking science, I would say is about the stories that we have been told: especially, the stereotypes, the misrepresentations, and so forth. And I will leave it to this short video (<https://youtu.be/4QYrAqrpshw>) to make this next point. But with the proviso that as you watch it, realize that research writing is also storytelling, and potentially of the most dangerous kind, because it is often read as truth.

Decolonialists also argue that in our globalizing world, we can be certain that many “ways of being” were, have been, and still are being threatened, alongside ways of knowing. In fact knowledge—as a key ideological and economic frontier—is a battlefield where Western (or more precisely Euro-North American) thought, albeit provincial, is universalized through the exportation of gendered, racialized and heteronormative relations of capitalist production imbued in certain academic knowledge regimes, internationalized education systems, neoliberal economic and governance models, ‘modern’ lifestyles informed by global popular cultures, and other forms of “coloniality of power” (Quijano 2000, 2007) that inadvertently—and in certain instances, intentionally—destroy numerous ontologies and related world senses in their wake.

Decolonial thought also speaks to indigenous knowledge movements that argue for an understanding and recognition of other ways of knowing and sensing the world; that is, ways that are non-binary (refusing splits like theory-practice, or culture-nature), non-proprietary,

collective/communal, dynamic, relational and also seek to ensure the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples. These scholars and activists also call for a holistic view on knowledge that not only takes the spiritual, developmental and political into account (Dei, 2000, 2002; Episkenew, 2009; Wangoola, 2000), but also recognizes the interconnected ecological relationships among humans (i.e., the living, ancestors, and the unborn), as well as other species and the environment.

It is in light of these arguments that Ramon Grosfoguel (2008) asks us whether we can produce knowledges that go beyond both Eurocentric and Third World fundamentalisms. Both he and other decolonial scholars, speak of the need to end the “epistemic violence” embodied by mainstream academic scholarship (Mignolo, 2009; Spivak, 1995). Collectively (as well as individually), they argue for conscious objections to what Grosfoguel describes as the “epistemic racism/sexism” that is foundational to the knowledge structures of westernized universities that are implicated in the extermination of other knowledges and ways of being. These decolonial scholars, as well as scholars such as Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Molefi K Asante (2012), critique the “tyranny of abstract universals” and the persistence of Euro-North American intellectual thought in academic and everyday imaginaries around the globe. They also call for a reconstitution of knowledges on other world-senses—and views—in order to delink from westernized knowledge production processes, which basically serve as an essential component of the ongoing maintenance of a “colonial matrix of power” (Quijano, 2000, 2007).

It is for the reasons just mentioned that certain critical epistemological questions have been raised. For example, the one by Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) when he asks:

“How is it possible that the canon of thought in all the disciplines of the Social Sciences and Humanities in the *Westernized university* is based on the knowledge produced by a few men from five countries in Western Europe (Italy, France, England, Germany and the USA) [sic]?”

The same might be said about the sources of knowledge for other disciplines within the westernized university. Consequently, there is an urgent need to rethink knowledge production, especially with regards to these and other challenges faced within higher education; that is, issues to do with the binaries, boundaries and hierarchies of knowledge, for example. More specifically, we find ourselves in a material moment whereby knowledge has become an economized industry within which universities continue to be coopted by neoliberal ill-logics; thus, are corporatized as they compete for global rankings, based on narrow categorizations of what is valid knowledge for living in an ever expanding and overburdened universe, while scholars vie for limited resources and a handful of tenured positions in an employment market epitomized by precarity and laced with the illusion of scientific objectivity or detached, neutral points of observation. Even more disturbingly, knowledge from specific Euro-North American locations is still being universalized, as it attempts to displace other knowledges (ways of seeing and sensing) that are actively ignored or marginalized. This, is why for the sociologist and legal scholar Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), any process of “untraining” our intellectual selves must include an acknowledgement of the “autonomous and enabling diversity” in the world (p. 15).

In conclusion of the reasons for why we must (un)think science, we as knowledge producers are significantly implicated in neoliberal imaginaries (by this I refer to privatization, patenting and commodification efforts) and concomitant processes for knowledge and its production for our development within a rather linear (and binary) narrative of growth and

civilizational progress. This, is why the investigation and comprehension of the politics of the “who, where, what, why and how” of scholarship (Moya, 2011) are critical and foundational concerns for doing what I describe as an (un)thinking of science. My use of (un)thinking—versus say, rethinking—is purposeful, because I use the term to stress the need for us to move beyond scientific approaches mired in a language of hierarchical Cartesian binaries (Functowiz & Pereira, 2015), where false dichotomies are constructed between minds and bodies, culture and nature, theory and practice, physical and metaphysical, men and women, self and other, and so on—ad infinitum. Instead we require transgressive practices that enable us to attempt to gain understandings, albeit partial ones, of contemporary—chaotic, complex and contradictory—phenomena through knowledge production processes that are not reductionist, exclusionary, elitist and/or privileging of only western modes of seeing (versus sensing) the world.¹

With this, I argue for the decolonizing of our current modes of knowledge production within academia. More specifically, I propose that we seek ways to become reflexive and embodied agents for social and cognitive justice within our institutions, communities, societies, and the world at large. This becoming of ours needs to include the identification of radical and critical pedagogies, which enable us to teach ourselves (and others) how to transgress established knowledge boundaries (hooks, 1994), as well as how to move beyond Cartesian thinking that privileges the mind over body, theory over practice, the text over context, and so on. We should do this by inhabiting the ambiguous and frustrating interstices of such false hierarchical binaries, with all of our bodies, minds, hearts and souls. We must find a way to link our multiple and intersectional selves into our work, leaving nothing by the wayside—especially not the spiritual and quirky aspects of our identities (for example, in my case, it is an obvious love of cartoons).

If we are aware that reality is socially constructed and that much of our everyday is about performativity, then why do we see fit to unquestionably section out so-called non-academic parts of ourselves (e.g., emotion, artistry, activism, or spirituality) from our ‘objective’ work processes? We need to learn to think with more than only our minds, but also too with our hearts—as after all these cells too have memory (Pearsall, 1999; Pearsall, Schwartz, & Russek, 1999). We must consider and experience knowledges that are not only read through the textual, but also heard through ears, smelt with the nose, tasted by the tongue and the skin, intuited in our bones, and sensed on both physical and metaphysical planes. This is what I consider as (un)thinking: a wallowing, and perhaps for some even a drowning in changeable seas of knowledge (im)possibilities that are at times fresh and soothing in their familiarity, but often salty, rough and terrifying in their chaotic inundations, as they wrench us through their unknown conceptions of existence.

Now, here, I want to continue to elaborate further on how we might be able to attempt an (u)thinking of science. I will do so by talking to the experimentation of others, some of which are still to bear fruit. The most obvious recommendation, bearing in mind the many whys, is that we can start by recognizing that a dynamic and complex world such as ours requires inter-, multi-, cross- and trans-disciplinary approaches to science, as well as even postdisciplinary approaches to knowledge production processes.²

¹ I am aware of the irony of my making this argument within this rather logocentric presentation mode.

² According to Buckler (2004) postdisciplinarity differs from the other modes that she defines as follows: 1) Multidisciplinarity, which is about drawing upon knowledge from more than one discipline, while preserving the disciplinary identities of the various disciplinary elements. 2) Crossdisciplinarity, which tends to illuminate the subject of one discipline from the perspective of another, e.g., when a literary-studies scholar does a “close reading” of a legal contract. 3) Interdisciplinarity, where knowledge is produced through the integration of two or more disciplines, thus,

In my view, post-disciplinarity is of greatest interest as it is a matter of changing one's academic mindset, i.e., into one that is ready to transgress into knowledges beyond one's own disciplinary training, so as to better understand complex interconnections within and across the natural and sociocultural worlds. Postdisciplinary approaches already exist and can be found amongst mobility studies, cultural studies or feminist studies, to name a few. As far as Andrew Sayer (1999) is concerned, within the field of sociology, postdisciplinarity is a welcome change due to the parochial and often imperialistic character of the disciplines. For Sayer, "postdisciplinary studies emerge when scholars forget about disciplines and whether ideas can be identified with any particular one; they identify with learning rather than disciplines" (page 5). Similarly, Julie Buckler (2004), professor of Slavic languages and literatures and Comparative Literature, argues that postdisciplinarity "evokes an intellectual universe in which we inhabit the ruins of outmoded disciplinary structures, mediating between our nostalgia for this lost unity and our excitement at the intellectual freedom its demise can offer us" (page 2).

Postdisciplinarity would also serve to rupture what the Africana philosopher Lewis Gordon (2006) calls the disciplinary decadence of our times. Whereby he states: "Instead of being open-ended pursuits of knowledge, many disciplines have become self-circumscribed in their aims and methods in ways that appear ontological. By this I mean that many disciplines lose sight of themselves as efforts to understand the world and have collapsed into the hubris of asserting themselves as the world" (p. 8).

Engaging in post-disciplinarity, in some sense, begins to speak to Mignolo's (2012) notion of delinking; where we refuse to reify some knowledges above others and instead creatively engage in the formulation of novel approaches, perspectives, and theorizations that are situated in the borderlands, interstices or in-betweens of differential and differentiated epistemologies and ontologies. Delinking is also very much a part of the decolonizing project, such as that of Grosfoguel's (2013) for decolonizing of the westernized university. He suggests we can do so by, 1) acknowledging the provincialism and epistemic racism/sexism of foundational epistemic structures, resulting from four epistemicides/ genocides;³ 2) breaking with the uni-versalism, where provincial "Western man epistemology" (i.e., Euro-North American knowledge production and canon) is assumed to be universal; and 3) bringing epistemic diversity to the canon of thought, to create a pluri-verse of meaning and concepts; including inter-epistemic conversations to produce re-definitions of old concepts and the reconstitution of knowledges on other world-senses.

In my mind, any decolonizing project also requires forms of critical literacy—borrowing a term coined by educationalist Paulo Freire (1983/1991). As far as critical theorist and educationalist Douglas Kellner (1998) is concerned, there are multiple critical literacies required for the field of education especially in a globalizing world; that is, critical literacies in print, computer, multimedia, the media, the social, the cultural, and the ecological. To this long list, I

"contributing to a new foundational unity of understanding, perhaps even a new hybrid field" (page 2) through the redrawing of boundaries, however, based on "an understanding of the disciplinary norms that are being challenged" (page 2). 4) Transdisciplinarity, which is "the highest level of integrated study, that which proposes the unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives and points toward our potential to think in terms of frameworks, concepts, techniques, and vocabulary that we have not yet imagined" (page 2).

³ Grosfoguel (2013) describes the origins of the epistemic racism/sexism underscoring the ongoing "colonial matrix of power" as being rooted in four genocides/epistemicides of the 16th century as follows: Firstly, the Spanish conquest of Muslims and Jews in Al-Andalus during the 15th century. Next, the conquest of the Americas, after Christopher Columbus' arrival there on 12 October 1492. Then, the kidnapping and enslavement of millions of Africans, under the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, for over 400 years. Finally, in the 16th century, the genocide of Indo-European women, branded as witches, due to their leadership, authority and vast indigenous knowledge.

would also add the importance of enabling critical spatial literacy, which I describe as the development of a critical understanding of the politics of space; e.g., determining and documenting what kinds of social insights are encoded in the built environment, how the built form may reproduce and/or contest dominant ideologies (Amoo-Adare, 2013), and (in the latter case) how this contestation requires an ability to “critically read the world” (Freire 1983/1991, 1970/1996).

Basically, a critical literacy on space is a critical awareness of the historical, geographical, economic, cultural, and political meanings that inform and are informed by the built environment and its constructs (both physical and ideological). In this vein, I believe that we must develop several kinds of strategies for reading the word and world, or text and context; that is, developing reading techniques that go far beyond the general reading strategies that we would often learn about in primary school. For as Paulo Freire (1983/1991) reminds us:

“Reading is not exhausted merely by decoding the written word or written language, but rather anticipated by and extending into knowledge of the world. Reading the world precedes reading the word, and the subsequent reading of the word cannot dispense with continually reading the world. Language and reality are dynamically intertwined. The understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context” (Freire 1983/1991, p. 5).

In a similar vein, we also need to critically re-write the word and world. For as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), a scholar of indigenous education, says: “Writing can also be dangerous because we reinforce and maintain a style of discourse which is never innocent” (p. 36). This danger is magnified for her in particular, because, as she says, “When I read texts, for example, I frequently have to orientate myself to a text world in which the centre of academic knowledge is either in Britain, the United States or Western Europe; in which words such as ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’, ‘I’ actually exclude me.” (ibid, p. 35). Note that in talking about writing here, I do not want to privilege the written text as a sole way of knowing and being. This would be problematic, in light of the many modes of writing that abound, especially those that invoke the use of the body and those that are instant in nature.

Aside from developing critical literacy, there is also the importance of understanding that all knowledge is situated, in that knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and that those circumstances shape it in some way. Consequently, we should not and could not pretend to be all-seeing and all-knowing scientists. For feminist geographer Gillian Rose (1997) reflexivity becomes a key strategy for situating knowledges because it avoids a false neutrality and universality of academic knowledge.

It follows then that engaging with positionality (at all scales) also matters for (un)thinking science, as well as for situating knowledges. Professor of English and Women’s and Gender Studies, Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater (1996) argues that researchers are positioned by age, gender, ‘race’, class, nationality, sexuality, institutional affiliation, intellectual predisposition, education history, and other aspects of their personal circumstances and experiences that in turn mediate their very production of knowledge. And yet within academia—for a long time—positionality had been like the proverbial elephant in the room, ever present but treated as invisible in the face of (problematic) positivistic notions to do with the neutrality, objectivity and universality of knowledge and its production within academic scholarship. This, is why feminist scholar Donna Haraway (1988), who is professor emerita in the History of Consciousness, argues for “politics and epistemologies of location, positioning and situating” for making knowledge or truth claims.

Basically, we must move toward radicalizing our various approaches to scientific inquiry. For this, I would say there are already many different radical approaches to decolonize or transform our research practices toward making what feminist educator AnaLousie Keating (2013) calls “threshold theories”, for better understanding contemporary phenomenon. These would be approaches as follows:

- being post-disciplinary scholars in our use of perspectives, concepts, and/or methodologies; thus, engaging in “border-thinking” and working with the in-betweens, thresholds, intersections, interstitials, and edge conditions of science.
- doing scholarship for social justice; i.e., research praxis with an interplay between reflection and action, knowing and doing, research and practice.
- (un)thinking of normative modes of science, by engaging in scholarship that is slow, embodied, contemplative, collective, spiritual, non-western, and/or indigenous; including even about an “Academics of the Heart” (Rendon, 2000), or “ethnographic refusal” (Zahara, 2016).

In addition, several scholars also insist on a decolonizing of time, our bodies and pedagogy (Shahjahan, 2015); that is, by focusing on slow scholarship, alongside scholar-activism and collective action, as a response to the current corporatization of higher education (Mountz et al, 2015). Others call for a critical reassessment of the biopolitics of research (D’Hoest & Lewis, 2015), as well as speak of the desire to move to more embodied learning (Wagner & Shahjahan, 2014) or spirituality in learning (Hart, 2004; Shahjahan, 2004).

Here, I want to talk of one or two approaches in detail. For example, professor of higher education Laura Rendon (2000), argues that although we are charged with the sacred task (of seeking and illuminating truth, unraveling mysteries, and entering and bringing light to darkness), many of us are unable to adequately do so because we sit under a fog of modern consciousness that has been inherited from Descartes and his followers. This namely is enshrined in 2 ideas: 1) that we gain understanding solely through intellectual training and analysis, and 2) that reason and emotion are separate and irreconcilable.

For Rendon (2000), this challenge can be overcome by enabling what she describes as an “Academics of the Heart”, made up of three elements that need to be incorporated into research design, analysis and discussion of findings; namely

1. Viewing research as a relationship-centered process, in which “the knower and what is to be known exist in relationship to each other” (p. 6) and both the heart (artistry of spirit) and science are honored in research practice.
2. Honoring diverse ways of knowing, as the truth comes in many forms and from a vast array of realities.
3. Engaging in contemplative practice, self-reflection, and introspection, while connecting the inner and outer nature of knowledge (i.e., ourselves to the external world).

Rendon (2000) turns to the ancient wisdom of the indigenous people of Mexico and Central America to frame the philosophical foundation of the research dimensions of her “Academics of the Heart”. So from the Mayas, she takes the 1) principle of the unity of existence, 2) the connection of opposite principles, and 3) the idea that to “know” is to understand how something fits in a changing, expanding world system. Additionally, she states that the Mayas saw science

and divination as being inseparable. Also, from the Aztecs, she takes the idea of the importance of employing the heart in the search for individual growth and universal truth.

Rendon's position aligns with social innovator and educator Dustin Craun's (2013) call to re-center human consciousness from the mind to the heart; i.e., shifting from what he calls a mind-centered egolatry of colonial modernity to Islam's epistemic decolonization through the heart. More specifically, Craun describes how in (Sufi) Islamic thought, the human being is created by God and is made up of these 5 parts: 1) body (*jism*), 2) mind (*aql*), 3) spirit (*ruh*), 4) the self (*nafs*), and 5) heart (*qalb*), the latter of which is considered to be a spiritual organ that is central to existence and the human being's relationship to God (p. 106). In this argument for the heart in human consciousness, Craun speaks not only about reunifying Anthropos (other) to Humanitas (self), but also of the relevance of "decolonial love" (a concept that has been developed by Chicana@ feminists), as a way of re-centering the sacred into science by using Love to help us move towards global understanding and decoloniality. For example, he speaks of Chicano/Latino studies scholar Laura Perez's and her interest in the Mayan principle of *In'Laketch*: in Spanish meaning "*tu eres mi otro yo*" and in English "you are my other me".

Here I must also refer us to postcolonial feminist and Chicana studies scholar Chela Sandoval (2000), who also speaks to "decolonial love" as she lays out a method for emancipation that she terms as a "Methodology of the Oppressed". More specifically, in her book of the same name, she provides us with the primary inner and outer technologies that construct and enable a differential mode of social movement and consciousness made up of different theories on (1) semiotics; (2) deconstruction; (3) metaideologizing; (4) differential movement; and (5) democratics. Additionally, she provides us with forms of this dissident consciousness in discussions about

- (1) the principles of political love and desire;
- (2) love as a political apparatus;
- (3) the end of academic apartheid;
- (4) the bases for creating interdisciplinary knowledge;
- (5) radical *mestizaje*;
- (6) *différance*;
- (7) The grammatical position of subjugation;
- (8) the middle voice as the third voice;
- (9) technoscience politics; and
- (10) decolonizing cyberspace.

Additionally, in the Anders Burman (2012) reading provided, he gives us a detailed account of Aymara epistemology in which thinking is also said to occur in the heart (or thorax), as well as in the mind.

Of equal importance is the work of feminist, queer and Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa (1987/2012) on "borderlands" and "border consciousness", of which she put forward the latter as a strategy to enable her own spiritual activism. For Anzaldúa, borderlands can be found in physical geography, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, gender, language and psychological frames of mind; all of which must always be crossed, as a kind of reconstitution of the oppressive, hegemonic and patriarchal conceptions and realities of said borders, plus as a reconceptualization of the boundaries of life. This she does by embodying a practice of "border consciousness" (new

mestiza), which comes as a result of her grappling with an ambiguous multiple-identity and positionality situated and resisting at the interface of the Mexican-American border.

For Anzaldua, borderlands is a liminal space (i.e., a space of possibility). It is why she says:

Because I, a *mestiza*,
continually walk out of one culture
and into another,
because I am in all cultures at the same time,
soul between two worlds, three, four,
my head buzzes with the contradictory.
I'm guided by all voices that speak to me
simultaneously.⁴

Decolonial scholars Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova (2006) also argue that borders are not only geographic, but also epistemic. It is for this reason that they both call for a shifting of the geo- and body-politics of knowledge, which means that it is not only physical borders that need to be contested, but also knowledge borders. This is because the territorial and imperial modern foundation of knowledge. Moreover, the concept of borders and border crossing has been taken up beyond anthropology, political science, and sociology and is also considered within literary theory, cultural studies, media studies and decoloniality discourse. In these disciplines, borders can exist in different arenas such as cultural, political, territorial, racial, psychological, social, sexual and so on.

Ultimately, of interest to (un)thinking science would also be a decolonizing of methodologies, and there are many lessons to learn from the work on indigenous methodologies by indigenous education scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), anthropologist and philosopher Rodolfo Kusch (2010), and indigenous knowledge scholar and educationalist Margaret Kovach (2009)—to name a few. But even more importantly, we should also consider refusal to collect and/or disseminate research findings as an important approach to (un)thinking research practice. For example, Alexander Zahara (2016), a doctoral student in geography (with a focus on Discard studies), presents us with “ethnographic refusal” as “...a practice by which researchers and research participants *together* decide not to make particular information available for use within the academy. Its purpose is not to bury information, but to ensure that communities are able to respond to issues on their own terms. An ethnographic refusal is intended to redirect academic analysis away from harmful pain-based narratives that obscure slow violence, and towards the structures and institutions that engender those narratives.”

Finally, I would say that we should engage in certain radical pedagogies for teaching students and ourselves how to transgress knowledge boundaries; that is, ideas imbued in education philosophies such as critical pedagogy (Freire, 1973; McLaren, 2001, 2007; Giroux, 2010; Darder, 1992/2009) and anarchist geographies (Illich, 1973; DeLeon, 2008; DeLeon & Wayne Ross, 2010; Springer, 2012, 2013), as well as other critical modes of instructional praxis.

Critical pedagogy, for example, is designed to serve the purpose of both empowering educators and ‘teaching for empowerment’; in that: 1) It asks what is the relationship between what educators do in the classroom and efforts to build a better society. 2) It encourages educators to seek connections that would link their personal brand of pedagogy to wider social processes, structures, and issues. 3) It provides educators with the critical skills, conceptual means, and moral

⁴ This poem is entitled *Una lucha de fronteras/ A Struggle of Borders*.

imperatives to analyze critically the goals of schooling (McLaren, 2007). Critical pedagogy accordingly “involves a strong agenda for change: within education, through education and throughout society” (McArthur, 2010), as must also be the case in any critical (un)thinking of the sciences.

Critical Pedagogy is exactly why Paulo Freire (1998) states:

“One of the most important tasks of critical educational practice is to make possible the conditions in which the learners, in their interactions with one another and with their teachers, engage in the experience of assuming themselves as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons; dreamers of possible utopias, capable of being angry because of a capacity to love.” (pp. 45-46)

Ultimately for me, an important aspect to any (un)thinking is that of (un)learning all that we have been socialized into. This starts by not taking any of the processes that we know for granted. It is also done by engaging in post-disciplinarity (as mentioned), as well as through the decolonizing of methodologies. Of significance in these endeavors are a conscious awareness of positionalities and a bid to ideally co-construct threshold theories, as essential aspects of a researcher’s open-ended becoming and for better contestation of power-knowledge regimes that reify and universalize context-specific ontologies, cosmologies, ecologies, epistemologies, philosophies on existence, and so on. For after all:

Learning is not something that happens in parenthesis; something you bookend between your head, four walls, a class period, a school year, or some momentary academic career. Learning is (un)Learning; it’s (non)living, (un)becoming, and (dis)believing; it’s (un)ambiguous and (un)pronounceable; it’s as open ended as my thoughts flying off this page and into your amorphous existence.... (Amoo-Adare, 2016)

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