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## How to Be Unfaithful to Eurocentrism: A Spanglish Decolonial Critique to Knowledge Gentrification, Captivity and Storycide in Qualitative Research

### Abstract

From a position of academic activism, we critique the longstanding dominance *del* production of knowledge that solely implicates fidelity to Eurocentric methodological technologies *en* qualitative research. Influenced by an Andean decolonial perspective, *en* Spanglish we problematize *métodos* of analysis as the dominant research practice, whereby *las* stories *o* *relatos* result *en su* appropriation, captivity and gentrification, first by researchers' authorship and later by the publishing industry copyrights. We highlight the racializing and capitalist colonial/modern Eurocentric agenda *del* current market of knowledge production that displaces to *la* periphery all knowledge *o* *relatos* that do not subscribe to Euro-US American methodological parameters of what counts as knowledge. Therefore, we intend to heighten the readers' audibility of another possibility of knowing that does not come from Eurocentric methodologically produced stories. At the forefront of our critique, and as an introduction to a decolonial option, we include our written, uttered, and painted stories, with the political intent of social transformation of coloniality. These seek to denounce power structures that have had incarnated effects on our lives *y* *comunidades*. We intend to invite researchers to serve as witnesses of our experiences rather than as critics of methodological rigor. We include final commentaries on a decolonial project to rethink the unquestionable fidelity and dependency toward the current research order of things of *el* center and *la* periphery. This is so as to render European technologies of knowledge as only one alternative among many other possible means of legitimate knowledge making in qualitative research. We discuss our hope for epistemological coexistence by which fair and reciprocal intercultural translations of knowledge making could take place, not in the name of equality, but difference.

### Keywords

Eurocentrism, Decoloniality, Decolonization, Coloniality, Modernism, Qualitative Research, Spanglish, Academic Activism, Stories, Research Methods

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decolonial feminists.

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# How to Be Unfaithful to Eurocentrism: A Spanglish<sup>1</sup> Decolonial Critique to Knowledge Gentrification, Captivity and Storycide in Qualitative Research

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*From a position of academic activism, we critique the longstanding dominance del production of knowledge that solely implicates fidelity to Eurocentric methodological technologies en qualitative research. Influenced by an Andean decolonial perspective, en Spanglish we problematize métodos of analysis as the dominant research practice, whereby las stories o relatos result en su appropriation, captivity and gentrification, first by researchers' authorship and later by the publishing industry copyrights. We highlight the racializing and capitalist colonial/modern Eurocentric agenda del current market of knowledge production that displaces to la periphery all knowledge o relatos that do not subscribe to Euro-US American methodological parameters of what counts as knowledge. Therefore, we intend to heighten the readers' audibility of another possibility of knowing that does not come from Eurocentric methodologically produced stories. At the forefront of our critique, and as an introduction to a decolonial option, we include our written, uttered, and painted stories, with the political intent of social transformation of coloniality. These seek to denounce power structures that have had incarnated effects on our lives y comunidades. We intend to invite researchers to serve as witnesses of our experiences rather than as critics of methodological rigor. We include final commentaries on a decolonial project to rethink the unquestionable fidelity and dependency toward the current research order of things of el center and la periphery. This is so as to render European technologies of knowledge as only one alternative among many other possible means of legitimate knowledge making in qualitative research. We discuss our hope for epistemological coexistence by which fair and reciprocal intercultural translations of knowledge making could take place,*

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<sup>1</sup> Spanglish is not the subject of discussion of this paper but a pertinent ethical linguistic means by which we engage in discussion. It is the language that represents some of us, and which often carries a derogatory meaning from monolithic and single-minded English (Anzaldúa, 2008; Sommer, 2004; Stavans, 2003). Therefore, we find it important to bring it to the forefront as it adds to our politics of response in this paper against coloniality (of language in this case [polanco, 2019]). In addition, as Ian Stavans (2003) wrote, Spanglish is the linguistic juxtaposition of south and north, "The verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations" (p. 5). Therefore, in light of our unfaithful yet intercultural decolonial spirit here in relation to Eurocentrism's division of the world between north and south, it makes sense for us to adopt a coherent interlinguistic and vernacular vocabulary that is often unwelcomed in Anglo, Eurocentric scholarly publications. We are aware that for those unfamiliar with Spanglish, it may slow down their reading. Furthermore, it may also require them to stop and do some degree of "Google Translation™." We believe that this is precisely part of the task of engaging interculturality in a manner whereby our different cultural and linguistic locations are made overt (Sommer, 1999), so that we can make particular efforts to learn from them.

*not in the name of difference, but equality. Keywords: Eurocentrism, Decoloniality, Decolonization, Coloniality, Modernism, Qualitative Research, Spanglish, Academic Activism, Stories, Research Methods*

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We have come together to critique the longstanding dominance of the manufacture of knowledge in qualitative research that predominantly implicates fidelity (not always consensual) toward Eurocentric technologies or methodologies to make it legitimate. We met a few years ago *en la* Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU), *en* San Antonio, TX. Some of us have worked together in various instances, in and out of courses marcela facilitated, some *en* English and others *en* Spanglish. This was during our family therapy master's and doctorate in counseling psychology training. We met Jackolyn in writing through the preparation of this paper; and she is Tirzah's mother. Here, we intent to problematize the devalued transformative and moral worthiness of vernacular stories in academia, *o relatos de la calle de la vida*, when not produced out of Eurocentric qualitative research methodologies.

Borrowing from social activists and scholars in *Abya Yala*<sup>2</sup>/*América Latina y el* Caribbean, marcela introduces Andean decoloniality<sup>3</sup> (Curiel, 2013; de Sousa Santos, 2014; Escobar, 2007; Espinosa Miñoso, 2009; Grosfoguel, 2016; Lander, 2005; Lugones, 2008; Quijano, 2000; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) as the epistemological and ontological location from where we are articulating our critique. This is with intention of epistemological diversity for knowledge production. We write within qualitative research to critique it, considering its longstanding disobedience against the positivistic research canon. Hence, we believe qualitative researchers' already-developed unfaithful skills make them possible political allies in a decolonial project.

At the forefront of our critique and as a way of introduction, below we include our written (some in Spanglish), uttered, and painted stories *o relatos*, contextualized first within our intentions of academic activism. The stories were written, uttered, and painted in the vernacular. Their intention is twofold. They seek to convey moral messages with intent to perturb *el* colonial order of things in our lives. Additionally, they hope to stand on their own to recuperate their knowledge worthiness even though they were not produced through any qualitative research methodological procedures that could have resulted in their captivity, gentrification or storycide (we discuss these terms below).

The story-graphy, utterance, and painting of our stories come from a location of epistemic privilege (Hill Collins, 2000). This means that we created them from *our* vantage point, given that it was us who experience those events. Furthermore, our vernacular vocabularies and images have been chosen not only to reach qualitative researchers but, more importantly to us, to reach the "Liborios" of the world—or the everyday people living at the borders of differences, whether these are cultural, epistemological, ontological, historical, social, economic and/or political differences. Liborio is the main character in the novel *The*

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<sup>2</sup> Abya Yala is the Kuna name for what Europeans later called our continent as América Latina/Latin America. Decolonial activists use the Kuna name as a means to juxtapose two distinctive paradigms, Abya Yala and América Latina, which have coexisted since the times of the colonization.

<sup>3</sup> While we will do not discuss the differences between postcoloniality and decoloniality, it may be important to emphasize that while they complement one another in their critiques to Eurocentrism, they come from particular perspectives. Postcolonial theory mostly emerges from the academia (Curiel, 2016) and is embedded in the colonial historical experience of India and Africa. Meanwhile, decoloniality emerges from social movements of activism in relation to South America and the Caribbean colonization. Additionally, South American and Caribbean scholars who have adopted and further explored decoloniality in the academia (to critique it) come from different disciplines such as social sciences—sociology, anthropology, political science and economy, while postcolonial scholars come from humanities—literature, history, philosophy. This mark some differences of perspective as well (Castro Gomez, 2005).

*Gringo Champion* (2015), written by 19-year-old award winner Mexicana writer Aura Xilonen. Liborio is a Mexican immigrant living and working in the US with no immigration documentation after being forced to leave México. He lives in an unnamed gringo city and works at a bookstore. He invites us to consider both vernacular and scholarly language carefully and with intent when he says, in his very pungent Spanglish:

*And if fucking figures, later on I picked up a book of poetry—when I was moving on from picture books and that sort of thing—because it was skinny and didn't have too many words, and I ended up having to read the soddamn massive fucking dictionary because I didn't understand a thing the pinche poet was saying (Italics in the original, p. 74).*

Consequently, we hope to have written and painted our stories and this manuscript in a manner by which the reader, scholars and non-scholars *do* understand a thing on the moral messages we are conveying. However, we want to warn the reader that the soddamn massive fucking dictionary, Spanglish-English and/or Urban, may be required here and there.

Following our stories, we highlight the decolonial epistemological foundations of our infidelity toward qualitative research technologies or methodologies that otherwise would have produced them via captivity, gentrification, or storycide. We discuss the colonial/modern, Eurocentric agenda of the current market of knowledge production (Castro Gomez, 2005; Lander, 2005) sustained and constructed by coloniality (Quijano, 1999; 2000), its capitalist institutional systemic structures, Eurocentric technologies, and scientific community of researchers, in this case. Furthermore, we discuss its center/periphery logic, whereby all knowledge that makers of knowledge who do not subscribe to Euro-US American parameters at the center of what counts as knowledge, and who are considered knowledge producers, are displaced as inexistent to the periphery where their knowledges undergo storycide. We end with decolonial remarks that articulate our hopes to continue to reimagine the coexistence of epistemologies, knowledges and means of knowledge production that can emerge from an alternative order of things of a center and a periphery, so as to engage fair inter-cultural, not strictly inter-geographical, transformative and reciprocal translations (de Sousa Santos, 2008, 2014) as means for knowledges or story production *que hagan la diferencia*.

### **Academic Activism**

Our critique comes with aspirations of academic activism, despite the intrinsic contradiction of such a statement (Flood, Martin & Dreher, 2013). I (marcela) situate the academia—where I earn my livelihood—as a privileged center of Eurocentric institutional power from where *el* knowledge is produced worldwide *en cada rincón del mundo*. We say more about Eurocentrism below. As a faculty member of a US university, as well as a Colombiana immigrant woman of color, I am complicit with the operations of academia. But I am beginning to discern slight options of response to my complicity, more so when meeting face to face with the words of Martinique psychiatrist, Franz Fanon (1988). He wrote:

...it would seem that all the problems which man [*sic*] [woman, wo/men] faces on the subject of man [*sic*] [woman, wo/men] can be reduced to this one question: “Have I not, because of what I have done or failed to do, contributed to an impoverishment of human reality?” (p. 3).

When considering what I have done or failed to do in my relatively privileged position in US academia, certainly I have not only contributed to the impoverishment of reality but also of my

own humanity. Hence, activism provides me with alternatives of response to discern and critique through a decolonial lens, in this case the conditions of my ongoing faithfulness toward this system and its impoverishing practices of which I have been an accomplice in replicating. I am aware that some decolonial activists would critique my claim of activism and adoption of decoloniality in academia since they find this place unsuitable for such a task, precisely by being one of the sites for colonial production instead. As the Bolivian Aymara, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) wrote,

El discurso postcolonial en América del Norte no sólo es una economía de ideas, también es una economía de salarios, comodidades, privilegios, así como una certificadora de valores, a través de la concesión de títulos, becas, maestrías, invitaciones de docencia y oportunidades de publicación. (p. 66)

Nevertheless, upon recognizing my contradiction I can critique the academia within and against it to the extent that it is possible for me (as an *imigrante, Colombiana* woman *de color*), for purposes of including decolonial intercultural alternatives to reimagine initiatives that keep from impoverishing realities. Otherwise, I can further support and replicate its Eurocentric practices with my eyes closed *o haciéndome la boba* only for self-serving purposes of professional promotion and tenure that could very well continue to impoverish the world. Although it is easier said than done, I chose the former to find ways to delink *o desenchangarme* (Mignolo, 2005/2012) from having to sell what is left of my soul (that was given to me through my colonization) or my humanity (also a colonial legacy and at times under question) to the latter (as I am currently beginning to prepare my promotion and tenure dossier).

Hence, my loyalty to activism within this context is one of Bakhtinian response-ability or answer-ability (Morson & Emerson, 1990) to make a humble attempt at repairing academia's historical sustainability of the coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2005), and to rethink spaces for the development of a fair trade (polanco, 2016) of inter-cultural (Walsh, 2009) knowledges, which we discuss toward the end. There is much to be done, *sin duda*. This article is only one *pequeño* attempt, significantly inspired and informed by the groundbreaking work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's—Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou, Māori—*Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), although here we draw particularly from the historical experience of *Abya Yala* and the Caribbean.

### **Stories' Moral-Worthiness: In Search for Audiences That Will Reach the Liborios of the World**

*En* 2017, at OLLU, where I (marcela) worked for *seis* years, I was invited to do a scholarly presentation at an event that intended to recognize the academic contributions of faculty members to their programs and *profesiones*. The work I was invited to share had been markedly influenced by and was the result of my collaborations, co-presentations, co-research, and co-authorship with students of the master's and doctorate program. The theme that cut across our work together was related in one way or another to critiquing hierarchical colonial *discursos* in our lives as therapists, members of our communities, and communities we worked with. Hence, standing alone to speak about "my" work would not had been, *para nada*, a fair representation of *el* collective work done and for which only I had been invited to present, *en mi* privileged role as a faculty member.

In preparation for the event, troubled by the potential displacement and overshadowing of my collaborators' significant contributions, I became interested in sharing the privileged platform extended to me with this invitation. It was a platform that had already secured a listening academic and therefore influential audience. The event was to take place not only at

OLLU, but at another local prestigious private institution where I was expected to present, as well as part of their annual research fair. Gaining access to an audience or having privilege of enunciation is something I have learned to never take lightly—no matter how nerve-racking, sleep depriving, *berraco o cabrón* it always is to stand in front of an audience regardless of its size. I consider it to be an advantageous “p”olitical platform with great influential social worth, more so for an immigrant Indigenous, Afra, and Euro Colombian woman in the US.

Hence, I proceeded to send out a call to all master’s and doctorate students (steering away from a common academic practice to “hand-pick” students, following measuring ranks of class that implicitly and inadvertently discriminate when seeking “good writers” “strong students” “top of the class,” etc.). Instead I was seeking people interested in engaging the audience to expand on our work together on being influential in challenging colonial, hierarchical, dominant, oppressive, discriminatory, or marginalizing discourses through our stories of moral value. My invitation included a message like this:

If you decide to join me, you will have access to an academic, therefore, influential audience. Hence, what stories from your life—work or otherwise—would you be interested in sharing, which you consider imperative for them to listen to, so they may use their influence to join you in challenging whatever social dominant or colonial discourse?

Brandi, Camila, and Stephany joined with their “*Manifesto*” poem, which they wrote prior for one of our Spanglish courses with the same political intention. This was also the case for Ione’s self-portrait, *Two Vidas* off the famous *The Two Fridas* painting (Kahlo, 1939). Elizabeth’s story was written for a later presentation of this work at *The Qualitative Report* (TQR) conference, in Ft Lauderdale, Florida, in January 2019. Nathan’s “Nate” initial story was published elsewhere (Hanson, 2019), and his story here was written for the TQR conference. During the writing of this paper we invited Jackolyn after she shared her reflection on Tirzah’s initial story. The rest of the stories were written as part of the scheduled presentations that took place later in 2018.

### **Addressing the Audience**

Stories alone can only do so much—warn *los* French European, White, male *cuates intelectuales y compañía* from whom we have learned and hope to continue to learn a lot. They have warned all of us across the world who have been educated under the influence of *el Eurocentricismo*; this has been via their widely distributed poststructuralist and postmodern radical and critical philosophies on language and text during the last century. Taking from the *cuates* learnings, we recognize the importance that an audience has to bring stories to life. We are reimagining qualitative research here as a possible practice to link storytellers to appropriate audiences to create the appropriate conditions for people’s stories to come to life (rather than to appropriate stories for their gentrification or storycide, as we discuss below).

We intend here to reach a complicit witnessing audience. This is an audience opened to become troubled by the evidence of the impoverishing wrongdoings *de* hierarchical colonial structures incarnated in our everyday lives. We hope to evoke a response to the implicit messages of disobedience in the act of writing and painting against misuse of power. Our stories were written as a window to the dehumanizing incarnation of oppression in our lives, and as a mirror for the audience to possibly see themselves in it and take humanizing reflections into their worlds (Fanon, 1968, 2008; Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Hence rather than offering a description of our lived experiences to be subjected to analysis by an audience of scholars or researchers, we hope that researchers engage our stories from a position of their own humanity.



We hold on to aspirations of epistemological and ontological disobedience against methodological faithfulness, aspiring for such disobedience to become as contagious *como la cólera*.

Even though we are writing for an audience of qualitative researchers, the stories are intentionally not the product of any sort of methodological findings of ethnographic, narrative or phenomenological explorations, *o nada por ese estilo*. In other words, they are not products of the technologies of qualitative research procedures of data generation, gathering, or analysis. The stories *are* knowledge, our knowledge, produced from our autonomous experiences. Our experiences *son* knowledge. They stand on their own two feet, own terms, gender, *pasiones*, grammar, languages, *colores*, images, hence location of enunciation. Furthermore, they are followed by no theoretical or methodological discussion against the available literature. Neither did they come out of gaps in the research literature of related phenomenon to validate the relevance and worthiness of their social contributions, *ya que se valen por sí mismas*.

Therefore, it may make a difference if an audience of researchers put a pause, only temporarily, and if they wish, to strict concern for methodological rigor or Eurocentric, *cuates'* patriarchal techno-methodological parameters of scholarly Anglo writing, to put their trust instead on the worthiness of our autonomous vernacular English and Spanglish stories. Furthermore, they could consider judging worthiness instead based on their human experience of resonance possibly being transported by sentiments of outrage, *angustia*, hope, *esperanza*, humor, *tristeza*, intrigue, *orgullo*, concern, confusion, or whatever else.<sup>4</sup>

***Manifiesto by Brandi Velasco; Stephany Old Bucher; and Camila Hernandez.***

For you to understand mi lenguaje  
 you'd have to understand what it is to be Afro-Latina, Mexicana y Colombiana-  
 Americana  
 Make the mistake of confundiendo nuestras culturas  
 and you'll learn about THE CHANCLA real quick.  
 Dime que no soy Mexican por que soy white, y te dire que no eres Americano  
 cuz you're not Native  
 No me digas quien debo ser  
 Llena de la arepa con queso que cocino mi papá,  
 With cravings of lemon flavored hot cheetos,  
 elotes y esquites,  
 tamales y tortas,  
 tacos y quesadillas de la esquina  
 Pasteles de flan y tres leches  
 Pan dulce con coco  
 Y arroz con leche  
 Porque los sabores de mi vida y comida are too vibrant to be sofocado  
 Afterall,  
 How do you define the indefinite  
 Like the spectrum of a rainbow  
 My origin, my color, my place  
 Is mixed  
 No soy feisty ni spicy,  
 I am independent and strong  
 y mis opiniones no son secreto

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<sup>4</sup> See Bochner and Ellis (2016) on evocative writing from an ethnographic, Euro US American perspective.

Mi gente are not to be feared  
 mas mejor les debes un abrazo, una disculpa, y tú respeto  
 No me digas que no hable Spanish porque we're in América.  
 Si mi Abuela necesita ayuda, I will speak Spanish  
 Y tú mal de ojo me vale  
 Hablando Español and English no es fácil  
 you think in both and speak in one  
 las palabras se te van en uno and come back in the other  
 "Ay, pero eres muy gringa, no vas a entender la expression"  
 Todos somos parte del entendimiento  
 Somos bilingües cabrón, so deal with it!

*Doing the Unimaginable, A Family Tradition by Tirzah Le Feber and Jackolyn Le Feber.* My mom's mother died yesterday morning. My mom had flown to Pensacola few days prior—alone—to bear losing her mother in the company of her brothers and sisters, who were not alone. Her four brothers and six sisters were allowed to bring their four wives, their six husbands, their 25 children. Their children's children, 32 of them, also brought their 32 husbands and wives, and 45 children. All were invited to say goodbye. Their families, unlike my mom's family, have an open, never ending, never closing invite to be a part of the family's gatherings, conversations, fun, play, work, life changing events, and many other instances that often occur by being invited into a meaningful relationship with another. So, what is different about my mother? Why can't her husband, her five children, four partners and seven children come to be with her to show support, love, and care in solidarity with her mom's passing?

Why have we not been welcomed or invited, but rather met with closed, locked doors when the lights are on and everyone is home? Most importantly, why have I not been able to share my awesome dance moves with my mom's side of the family quite yet? Why? Why? Why, why, why, why?

Because my brother and I, 20 years ago, decided to be queer. Being queer according to my mom's parents and some of her family members is unimaginable, so my brother and I continue to be unimaginable to them. My mom, dad, and siblings' support of our queerness is also viewed as unimaginable. How sad for them to miss out on such lovely family. Their loss for sure!

I know what you are thinking!

How amazing my mom and dad must be to have created two queer children. But please don't feel bad for my three non-queer siblings; they are getting along okay being non-queer.

Being queer is awesome! I get to live out loud, in safe spaces. I have lived a life some could never fathom. My brother and I being visible in gayly fucking per se the one-sided heterosexual story of how to love romantically, may bring others to imagine what exists in the unimaginable. That has been pretty powerful to me and has made the separations and meaningless relationships with those unwilling to connect with us, in the name of our queerness, bearable.

Cheers to my mom and dad, for giving me the smart intellect to question taken for granted ideas of how to be in the world to see multiple perspectives hidden in one-sided stories, and for the bravery to live the less told, unprivileged stories.

PS: I got a text from my mom late at night yesterday. We have been invited to attend the funeral. My mom's family is starting to use their queer imaginations, and I would not miss it for the world!

PS: PS: When I texted the story to my mom, two years after her mom's passing, she texted back:

Jackolyn: Did you know that some years back when I moved to Alabama with your dad to be nearer to my parents, I confronted my mom and sister about you and your brother? Mom never asked about you and your brother. So, one day I told her I had five kids, not three; and proceeded to tell her all about what you and your brother were doing, jobs, etc. For myself, it lifted a burden I had put on myself. I no longer needed her approval for anything and I was not responsible for how she decided to react to anything I did.

Also, I was so pleased and thankful all of you kids came for my mom's funeral. I know all of you were there for me and that helped me so much.

***“Real Men” Don’t Cry by Nathan Hanson.*** I never thought that I would show emotion in front of a client, let alone shed tears. From a young age, I was raised with a clear message: “Boys don’t cry.” As soon as I graduated from high school, I left home to join the military. I became a Medic. The unspoken rule in the military was clear: “Don’t show emotion.” If you do, it could be perceived as weakness. Never was I perceived as weak. I never imagined that during my practicum training as a family therapist, a client could change me. What brought a grown man—a veteran—to tears? What changed? What’s more, is it okay for a therapist to shed a tear during a session?

As a practicum student, I was working at a local domestic violence service in San Antonio, TX. I started to hone my expertise in hiding emotions now as a therapist by listening to the horrors of violence and what human beings are capable of doing to those they say to “love.” I had been working with a woman about her future after getting out of a violent relationship, and healing from devastating trauma. She had been a musician for about six years. Music was her passion. As any good musician, she set herself out to heal through her music. She went on to write a song, which we discussed in our sessions as a therapeutic means. We talked about how it would be for her to write this song, and how therapeutic it would be to play it and sing the lyrics out loud during our sessions. She told me that it could be her way of healing the hurt, the pain, and a way of letting go of it.

In one of our sessions, after dealing with the arduous legal procedures of the very same trauma, shaken up, she asked me if she could play the song. I found it so powerful. It brought goose bumps to my arms. I was speechless. Tears followed, right in front of her. I became confused, taken aback, and lost. I did not know what to do or say at that moment. I was the therapist. How had I allowed her song to move me to tears? She asked me what I thought about the song. I could not say anything else, other than letting her know that I was literally speechless and evidently moved by the thoughts, pain, and agony of her experience clearly captured in the lyrics. The session ended. I had to call my mentor shortly after to talk about how lost and confused I was by having shed tears in the session. My upbringing and military training made me question if this was “normal” and “acceptable,” or maybe I had finally broken an unwritten emotional rule now as a family therapist. I was changed by the client and her healing experience. She changed the way I relate now to the appropriateness of my tears as an effective therapist. I learned from her that in the reality of things, as a man, it is ok for me to cry and to show emotions.

***Gracias Mamá by Eva Rivera.*** Growing up in the Rio Grande Valley, when I was in fourth grade, my teacher asked the class to make a drawing of our families as part of a daily journal she assigned for us to keep. My classmates and I eagerly went home to start working on our assignment. I happily drew my family as my mom and myself. I drew my mom with her short wavy hair and huge smile. I then drew my small self next to her with big eyes and short wavy hair as well. We both were standing under a tree next to our home and garden. We loved

being outside together. The next day, my teacher informed us that we were going to be presenting our assignment. I remember everyone's excitement to introduce their families, including their fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers. It was my turn. My excitement turned into nervousness. I proceeded to introduce my family—my mom and me. I recall clearly the loud sound caused by no one clapping nor smiling like they did with my previous classmates.

As I went back to my chair, I was suddenly bombarded by questions from my classmates: "That's it?" "Where's your dad?" "You don't have brothers or sisters?" "It must suck to be an only child." "Did he die?" Even though all these questions were targeting me, I sat on my chair quietly. But one comment that really stood out to me was by my teacher's daughter. "My mom says that kids that don't have both parents will never be successful and should just give up on their dreams." The teacher intervened with a tone of wisdom. "It's okay. She can still find a job."

I was young. I did not know how to interpret what the teacher and my classmates meant. As I got older, I better understood their curious judgements since they matched others I have come across throughout my life from different sources, blaming single-motherhood and attaching it to our Hispanic ethnicity. I heard others' fears that I would lack ability to finish school, or would not dare to dream to go to college, or would never be successful and able to accomplish my goals because I did not have the discipline and economic resources only a father could provide. I did not let those hurtful comments get to me then, and I still to this day do not let them affect me. They did not know my mother. She has been the only person I have had to push me through all of life's tough moments, the only person who's shoulder I could cry on when I have felt like giving up. Because of my mother's support, I have been able to set goals for myself as well as follow my dreams of becoming a therapist.

***I Will Not Deny Him by Elizabeth Vela.*** Recuerdo ese día como si fuera hoy. Ahí estaba él, sitting down behind a glass window, holding a black telephone on his left hand, waiting for me. His brown, watery eyes then locked into mine. A pesar de que el silencio nos consumía, nuestros corazones gritaban de dolor. So many thoughts rushed through my mind at that moment. So many emotions took over my heart. Ya cuando por fin pude hablar, I said, "Hola Papá, ¿Cómo estás?"

Nunca imaginé que vería a mi padre tras las rejas. Nunca imagine que estaría tras las rejas por haber asesinado a otro ser humano. The majority of mi familia pushed me away. Many friends began to judge me for the actions my father had committed. Todos me apuntaban por que era la hija de UN asesino. Many of them described my father as being this evil, heartless man. Tuve que aguantar humillaciones y criticas. It seemed as if everyone's opinion and judgment were more powerful than the pain that I was feeling deep down inside my heart. Part of me was hurting because my father was in jail, but the other part of me knew that he had to be in jail so he could pay for what he had done.

I think it has been one of the worse experiences that I have encountered, but despite that, I can say that I will never deny that I am his daughter. Nunca lo negaré. Others will continue to label him for his actions, but I have learned to not let those labels reach to me. It is difficult as of today to even disclose such an intimate part of my life, but sharing this story continues to give me strength in order to overcome what's coming next.

***A Worrier and A Warrior by Sonia Medina.*** My parents did not give me a middle name when I was born, as is commonly practiced in the United States. They were in their early twenties and new to living in this country after migrating from Mexico. They thought a middle name would make filling out paperwork complicated. I have simply been Sonia Medina my entire life. When I was 5, I asked my dad to call me Selena. I

decided this would make a good middle name for me, but he did not call me Selena. When I was in middle school, I gave myself another middle name, but it also did not stick.

The past few years, I have joked with a really good friend of mine that my middle name is whatever feeling I am feeling the most at any given time. Oftentimes, it is something like *worry*, *fear*, or *sadness*. However, most of the time it is all three, so I have baptized them *Anxiety*. For the past few years, Anxiety has been my middle name. It is the only one that has stayed. My friend is the only person I talk to about it in great detail on an almost daily basis. My culture and my religion do not believe in Anxiety, making it hard for me to discuss this part of me with my family. I usually do not tell people about this middle name, but when I do tell others, the response is usually something like, “Oh, really? But you’re always so calm!” It appears that I do not match people’s ideas of what Anxiety looks like.

I always struggle with explaining how for me, being calm on the outside is not a representation of what is happening underneath my skin. I could be sitting next to you having a panic or anxiety attack, and you would never know. Anxiety travels with me every single day to every place I go to. It has made a home inside all of my cells. Sometimes I wake up with it, and I cannot think of a single reason as to why it is there. Sometimes I just accept it without questioning its presence, and other times I still try to find its source with no success. I cannot even begin to describe how awful it feels to feel a wave of Anxiety first thing in the morning when I have not even finished opening my eyes. It feels like nausea in my stomach and dizziness in my head. My heart pounds so fast I am sure that others can hear it. It appears in the form of weird thoughts that stubbornly settle in my head. They are weird, unreasonable, unexplainable worries and fears. When Anxiety leaves, it takes my strength and energy with it leaving me exhausted. At times, it glues me to my bed. By now, my middle name has been such a heavy part of my life for so long that I feel weird when it is not there. I have learned how to live with it, making the moments without it hard to navigate.

With Anxiety running through my veins, I’ve completed a bachelor’s and a master’s degree, started my career, and travelled to other countries. When Anxiety is running at a fast pace through me, I try to slow it down with prayer, tea, yoga, crystals, deep breathing, music, reading, and positive affirmations. Half the time, I get through it because I have to. I do not have a choice.

### *Two Vidas by Ione Rodriguez.*



### **Storycide: Stories Gentrification in the Colonial Market Economy of Knowledge**

Stories, narratives, accounts, or histories have been *al* center of *el* qualitative research. They have been its raw material for production. As a qualitative researcher, journal reviewer,

and qualitative research instructor myself, drawing from the institutional, Eurocentric rhetoric of what is deemed as legitimate research, I (marcela) believe that it would be fair to say that our accounts, written and painted here, as research, could easily undergo what I can call *storycide o historicidio*, which consists in the eradication of stories by being deemed illegitimate or inexistent knowledge for colonial reasons I discuss next.

Among some of the possible perspectives available around the world from where we could understand the bleak scenario of the production of knowledge from where the moral worthiness of our stories could experience *storycide*, we borrow in great part from *Abya Yala y el Caribe* decolonial scholars and activists' work. Now, without a doubt Aura Xilonen's Liborio may not appreciate the sort of *pinche* terminologies for which one may end up having to read the soddamn massive fucking dictionary to understand a thing decolonial activists and scholars are saying. Therefore, I will try my best with the help of Urban and Spanglish dictionaries. I begin by providing a theoretical context of coloniality.

**Coloniality: Hashtag Columbus Goes Viral.** It was Anibal Quijano's (2000, 2015) undertaking to try to understand why the modern promise of its principles of freedom, equality and autonomy continues to fail the immense majority of the world (who continue to live in epistemological, social, economic, and political captivity and inequality) and led him to coin the term "*colonialidad*" or coloniality (2000, p. 201). He tracked the history of modernity back to the European colonization of the Americas (and not to the Illustration as it is most often considered) to find the continuation of the same infrastructure of domination in *Abya Yala* since the 15<sup>th</sup> century until today's time. Agreeing with Quijano, *la* culmination of *la* European colonization *o la descolonización de América Latina* did not end the system of domination of colonialism. The decolonization or culmination of the legal independence of the colonies did not change the social order of the world Europe had created and implemented thanks to the conquest of the Americas, but instead the globalization of this very same social order had begun. In urban terms, after the Américas seemingly dumped and unfriended Imperialism, Columbus's power infrastructure went global. Hashtag, Columbus went viral!

Therefore, for decolonial activists, modernity<sup>5</sup> and coloniality are two mutually interdependent historical developments (Mignolo, 2005/2012) since the times of colonialism; and as long as modernity continues, coloniality will as well, and the other way around. The viral globalization of the same social, political, discursive, narrative, epistemological, historical, and economic order of domination for over 500 years, is what Quijano called *colonialidad* or coloniality to make it visible, tangible and accessible for transformation.

Therefore, it is precisely the viral globalization of Columbus' colonial system of oppression to what Quijano attributed the failure of modernity's realization of its promise of freedom, equality and autonomy. Europe's self-promoted or self-centered modern promise of freedom, *autonomía* and social equality of heterogeneous individuals cannot be realized since, paradoxically, it created at the same time Eurocentric mechanisms that promoted precisely the opposite: inequality and domination.

500 years after, I believe research is trapped in this very same modern/colonial contradiction—same Columbus but with a makeover. Qualitative researchers' "discovery" of new phenomenological worlds of meaning (that "research participants" or rather storytellers may have discovered on their own vernacular terms, language, colors, genders, grammars, etc.

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<sup>5</sup>While Andean decolonial activists recognize the significant cultural transformative contributions of postmodernity by challenging the promise of modernity, they consider that it does not transcend or perturb the colonial/modern world. Rather they consider that postmodernity still sustains some of the same aspects of the modern paradigm (i.e., social inequalities, economic power, hegemony of international relationship, etc.). Furthermore, they state that postmodernism does not challenge imperialism, colonialism, and the racializing practices that perpetuates modernity (Lander, 1997).

long before their arrival) seek to transform social problems within modern Eurocentrism. Yet they are doing so through the development of neocolonial, Eurocentric, institutional systemic mechanisms, global technologies, and academic infrastructures that support the very same patterns of economic difference, knowledge discrimination, humiliation and appropriation that creates and sustains social problems. In Rivera Cusicanqui's words "es un cambiar para que nada cambie," that "encubren y renuevan prácticas efectivas de colonización y subalternización." (2015, p. 62).

Coloniality—or the viral continuation of the same historical, Eurocentric, political, social infrastructure of Columbus' domination since colonialism—has prevailed due to a colonial system of power that Quijano called the colonial matrix of power (2000). For purposes of our discussion in this paper to reclaim from coloniality the autonomous standing of moral worthiness of legitimate vernacular stories as knowledge, we discuss two axes that for Quijano has constituted and sustained this matrix of power until today's time: race and capitalism. First, however, we discuss the intellectual ideology that has created, carried out, and sustained this pattern of power: Eurocentrism.

***Eurocentrism.*** Eurocentrism situates the perspective of the North or Europe at the center and the South at the periphery (Dussel, 2005; Lander, 2005; Quijano, 2000). However, according to *el* Portugués Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), only the north of the north was represented in the Europe of Eurocentrism: Germany, England, France, Italy, Russia and later the United States. Now, agreeing with de Sousa Santos, from a geopolitical perspective, today the South at the periphery of Eurocentrism is no longer linked to a hemisphere or geo-identity. For example, as he pointed out, while Haiti is in the Northern hemisphere, it is part of the South, and Australia, in the Southern hemisphere, is geopolitically part of the North. Therefore, geopolitically, the South is a metaphor that encompasses the experiences and locations of all whom experienced and continue to experience the effects of coloniality, hence patriarchy, racialization and capitalism (de Sousa Santos, 2008). Agreeing with de Sousa Santos, the South is not a place of victimization, but of response and resistance against coloniality in search of alternatives of alliance between Souths and Norths, among many others. Our stories here are therefore Southern stories, even though some of us are of Euro US American origins.

Based on the above, this means that *el* Eurocentrismo is not a way of knowledge of all Europeans, nor property of Europeans' cognition, neither a representation of knowledge across all times and regions (Quijano, 2000). Rather, it is prevalent among all of us across continents, color, languages, gender, class, religion, geocultures, etc., who have been educated under its paradigm. We have been educated into Columbus ventriloquism, such that we ended up internalizing it into our subjectivities in a way that we came to believe it was our own *sangre* (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012).

Without a doubt, knowledge that has come from the Europe in *este Eurocentrismo* has brought very *importantes* contributions to social change, as much as it continues to have exceedingly savage social impact. Yet agreeing with Walsh and Mignolo (2018), "Western Christian Europeans had the right to build their own image of the world, like anybody else who had done so before them" (pp. 176-177). Nonetheless, it is fraudulent to expect that the totality of the world operates according to its technologies and mechanisms. Therefore, our intercultural decolonial critique here is not against the right of European epistemologies to continue their existence, in this case, within qualitative research. Rather it is a matter to resist its centric epistemological and ontological victorious existence vis-à-vis the inexistence, hence epistemicide (de Sousa Santos, 2014) of the peripheral South, where we situate our stories here. Following we discuss the Eurocentric racializing and capitalist content of the sustainability of the colonial matrix of power.

***Race: The Racialization of Knowledge.*** For Andian decolonial activists and scholars, the colonial system of power is constituted and sustained by a racially ascribe infrastructure of hierarchical classification, otherwise understood as racialization (Fanon, 1968, 1988, 2008; Quijano, 2000). This infrastructure is arranged across all social domains of life to determine humanity, hence, knowledge worthiness or legitimacy. The racialization or racial division of social life is not strictly reduced to phenotypical color or absence of color, but also in terms of gender, class, (Curiel, 2016; Espinosa Miñoso, 2009; Lugones, 2008; Quijano, 2000), language (polanco, 2019), geocultures, etc. Yet, it is a classification made to be essentializing or naturalizing of identity. It configured socially constructed forms of domination with essentializing features of difference, whereby new colonial identities were invented and then organized as binary oppositions (e.g., male/female; black/white; European/African; research/participant; faculty/student; etc.) in a manner whereby they could not be questioned due to its seeming natural or biological origins that kept hidden its social and cultural inventions. While certainly such essentializing binaries are not exclusive to the Eurocentric paradigm, Andean decolonial scholars have focused on it to understand its forms of domination in particular within the Andean cultures since the times of the colonization. Therefore, they have been interested on how they have been used to demarcate the difference between human (e.g., male, White, European) and non-human (e.g., female, queer, Black, Latin American, Asian, Middle Eastern, African) existence and worthiness.

This racial social hierarchy (Fanon, 1968) that went viral after colonialism organized the world between a superiority of *being* (or Europeans, white, male, researchers, English speakers, faculty, journal editors, Western epistemologies and methodologies, Christianity, heterosexuality, etc.) at the center (Europeans, white, male, researchers, English speakers, faculty, journal editors, Western epistemologies and methodologies, Christianity, heterosexuality, etc.) and an inferiority of *not-being* (or non existence) at the periphery (Africans, Middle Easterns, Latin Americans, Asians, Indians, black, brown, women, women of color, non-gender conforming, research participants, students, non-English speakers, consumers of research, non-Western methodologies and epistemologies, Muslim, etc.). Furthermore, within both categories exist a meta classification of superiority and inferiority. For example, within the binary classification of faculty as being superior in relation to students, the superior faculty category is further subdivided into a superiority and inferiority classification in itself: White, male, STEM research, faculty at R1 universities are considered superior in relation to the inferior faculty of color at teaching universities that focus on service instead.

From this social colonial infrastructure of racialization between a center/periphery and superiority/inferiority, the moral worthiness for social transformation of our southern stories here would be easily deemed as inferior, not qualifiable as knowledge, let alone legitimate knowledge. They would be considered something to remain in the periphery as inexistent, or subject of storycide. This is, unless we demonstrate that they have gone through the superior line of production of methodological procedures of the modern/colonial, Eurocentric manufacturing research industry for their gentrification, at the center of capital interests as we discuss next.

***Capitalism: Knowledge in Captivity and Storycide en el Market of the Gentrification of Knowledge.*** A couple of years ago some of us submitted a manuscript for an open peer review. The reviewer, whom we deeply respect and whose work we closely follow for their utterly fierce and radical position of resistance in their field, took us by surprise – *nos dejó con la boca abierta*. We include here their response with the same spirit of utmost respect, understanding their well-intended suggestions that seem to cut across the intersecting axis of the colonial matrix of power of race and capitalism:



In the manuscript's current form, it looks more like the authors are telling a story rather than engaging in scientific discussion.... The personal style in which the manuscript is written is not appropriate for a scientific journal article, as I see it. Particularly the use of first names is problematic. *This is about increasing the chances of being respected and taken seriously by the readers of a scientific journal.* I therefore strongly recommend to depersonalize the writing style.... Moreover, far too many personalized details are included in the manuscript. I therefore recommend deleting all such to sharpen the arguments and to make the paper more succinct and to the point. A minor issue: I am curious as to why marcela polanco insists on writing her name without capital first letters...I am not sure that is wise when authoring a scientific paper. (Our emphasis)

Certainly, the very well-intended reviewer (from whom we continue to learn a great deal) does not represent all qualitative research perspectives. However, the reviewer do speak to familiar patterns of the racialized, Eurocentric rhetoric embedded in qualitative research, which adds to the devalued worth of personalized, lower case, storied writing and researching, in the image and likeness of Anglo, white, Eurocentric, male, heterosexual, upper case, superior scientificism.

The implicit intersecting racializing and capitalist colonial dimensions within the reviewer's comment speak to what I (marcela) am calling the gentrification of knowledge in qualitative research scientific neighborhoods' planning. By this I mean researchers' (superior beings) initiatives to renovate what they may deem as deteriorated or unsophisticated vernacular stories of the Liborios storytellers of the world (inferior or less sophisticated researchers) due to their first person, storied, verbose, *relatos* perhaps using cursing, urban slang, or Spanglish with personalized details. Or, in Liborio's terms, using "words...that aren't in the wordbook...that fucking dictionary... incendiary words that are much clearer than all those muddled respectable words...that say everything in one fell shitkicker..." (Xilonen, 2015, p. 33)

Researchers' renovation of such stories would entail a methodological flip and fix into a succinct, scientific account with reputation-profits to appeal legitimate to an affluent Eurocentric scientific neighborhood and community (with the economic means to become scientists in the first place), who can now be engaged for scientific discussion. The assumed deteriorated former vernacular narrative is *entonces*, displaced, and the narrative composition shifts toward scientificism on behalf of the modern Eurocentric promise of progress (vs archaic) and development (vs underdevelopment).

In turn, storytellers are displaced, rendered ontologically mute into the periphery of inexistence. Their stories are appropriated by the researcher (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), hence humiliated or injured in their dignity, respect, and moral worthiness. Their remnants remain in captivity in a database now property of the researcher (or funding source) when not fitting within the current researcher's interest of inquiry but subsequently undergo storycide years after. Storytellers, objects of research, feature in the researchers' renovated narrative with respectable words as demographical contextual markers now called "research findings or discoveries."

Under such circumstances the gentrification of stories in *el* market economy of knowledge, what counts at the end of the day, on one hand, seems to be *el* capitalist worthiness of researchers' reputable publications, the impact on their respectability, and their promotion and tenure, and on the other, the research journals' reputable metrics on ranked impact factors. Considering the mutual interdependency of these two factors, the statistics of who cites whom,

the economic benefits of increased salary, grant funding, and the publication industry's profits become the heart of the matter of what drives the capitalist and neocolonial system of knowledge production.

As we researchers are busy consumed by our economically *enriching* reputations (e.g., faculty of color further whitening—in other words, selling our given colonial souls by aspiring toward Eurocentric institutional positions of White faculty); our national and international presentations; and our aspirations of making it into reputable research academic institutions; meanwhile the impoverishment of the world behind our backs in the periphery continues in destruction in great part as a result of the very same aspirations of progress and professional development of the few privileged that can even aspire toward it (or continue aspiring toward that which we will never be). *¡Que irony tan berraca!*

Our unfaithful stories attempted to escape their gentrification. They were not renovated through methodologies as prepackaged, *o no fueron empacadas al vacío*, nor were de-identified, analyzed, thematized, Nvivo™-ized, and data-ized (Denzin, 2013) as “discoveries” or findings authored by a depersonalized, succinct researcher with IRB buy-in. They intentionally and naughtily skipped the mandated flip and fix line of production of Eurocentric scientific technologies or methodological frameworks toward which researchers dedicate monogamous fidelity. We resisted the mandated renovation of stories into data-based-life findings, so as to be released into the capitalist market economy of knowledge for their consumption. Among consumers sometimes are the very same research participants who would be then eating their own knowledge but now come back from the researcher's mouth as innovative, original and scientific knowledge.

***Flip and Fix Gentrification Via Methodologies.*** The gentrification of stories, their captivity or storycide at the intersection of capital interest and racializing practices within the qualitative research market of knowledge production, has been carried out by a universal, modern intellectual perspective from where the world is understood: a Eurocentric hegemonic techno-scientific way of knowledge. This is at the heart of research. It thinks and organizes the totality of time, space, humanity, and existence supported by a rhetoric of progress (vs. archaic), development (vs. underdevelopment) and civilization (vs. barbaric).

This Eurocentric techno-scientific rhetoric, according to the Puerto Rican Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2017), is founded on the adoption of the idea of a “method” (p. 433) to produce secure knowledge, which, as he writes in a critique to research in the field of psychology, has shaped the practice of science hand in hand with coloniality. The method has acquired reliable legitimate status in the area of production of knowledge as “epistemic and ontological colonization” (p. 433), in turn, as the gentrification of knowledge. The success of modern/colonial Eurocentric research and its further replication lies in the ability to bridge the distance between the phenomenon of study located within the stories of participants and the researchers' findings

via methodical production of knowledge...[Hence, the adoption of methodologies] further clarify and cement the notion of fundamental differences (differences of being and nature) between some humans who could properly occupy the position of subjects and others whose ontological status seem closer to nature and where therefore destined to be, at best, objects of investigation. Method and science therefore played a role in securing the boundaries between populations that seemed to embody different levels of humanity (p. 433).

Maldonado-Torres helps to question what I believe has become an unquestionable common sense (internalized coloniality, [Casanova, 2003]) practice within qualitative research. This consists of a nonconsensual mandate to adopt methodologies by those at the level of humanity capable of doing so as the only legitimate means of knowledge production. Qualitative researchers' seeming critical and radical initiatives to advance research (following the modern principle of progress and civilization) may not be contributing to significant progress against Eurocentrism after all. The proposal of decolonizing or diversifying methodologies as critical, artistic, or post methodologies still sustains the assumption that the method must be at the heart of a legitimate knowledge making practice. It may be the same Columbus agenda, only with a new wardrobe. Maldonado-Torres, as well as de Sousa Santos, instead suggest rethinking knowledge production from a place of alterity, which may require one to surrender monogamous fidelity and dependency of the method as the only possible way.<sup>6</sup> This is what we attempted to do here – to publish stories of moral worthiness that did not adopt such method for their making. Now the adoption of the method comes hand in hand as well with a particular researcher position of coloniality pertinent for research, as follows.

***The Zero Point of Reference of the Operating System of Techno-Scientific Methods.***

According to the Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez (2010), the ongoing prevalence of the techno-scientific methodologies of the coloniality of knowledge that Nelson-Maldonado critiques, could be in part attributed to the particular position from where knowledge is constructed. Castro-Gómez calls this position *la hybris del punto zero*, or the zero point of reference. It consists of a privileged, impartial, imperceptible and knowledged point of unobservable observation, detached or bracketed from any sort of personalized humanity, embodiment *o corporalidad* (Castro-Gómez, 2010), so as to claim having gain accessibility to the objective or truthful essence of reality.

The zero point of reference for the researcher is like an iCloud™. It is everywhere but nowhere, with no features of humanity that may reveal the location, origins, politics, agenda, or means of power control, with heightened cybersecurity to protect against any rigged activities, WikiLeaks or attacks to integrity. This iCloud, like a Eurocentric research figure, is often featured in traditional expressions, such as “the available research demonstrates,” “according to research,” “researchers found,” “research shows,” “research data supported,” etc. The sort of questions scientificism works hard in preventing someone asking by keeping the iCloud in between its Eurocentric, superiorly forged brackets or epoché, would be in the following order:

Who are these researchers? What are their politics? From what epistemologies do they write? Who was responsible for their care and for shaping their lives growing up? Whose figures did they include in the drawings of their families in elementary school? What food do they eat? What nationalities, language, sexual attractions, gender, religion, dreams, friends, neighbors, schools, communities do they have or belong to? *¿A qué mundos pertenecen?* Whose pain, tears, dance moves, Anxiety, family visits, images, spices do they share? Whose hearts did they broke? Whose dreams did they inspire? Whose loss did they mourn? *¿A qué luchas se unen?* Whose stories did they appropriate? Who are the storytellers of the stories they appropriated? What have they done or failed to do to keep from the gentrification of knowledge? Whose worlds did they help impoverish? Or as Liborio would say: *¿De qué pinche lugar vienen?*

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<sup>6</sup> See Maldonado-Torres (2017) discussion of Fanon's proposal for a decolonial attitude vs a Eurocentric method within the context of the field of psychology.

### Final Commentaries: *Ch'ixi* Decolonial Knowledge Making

Our activist *intenciones* in *la academia*—within and against the Eurocentric racializing and capitalist techno-scientific methodologies of qualitative research—were inspired by the bottom up decolonial activist, affirmative and dynamic (vs archaic or exoticized) practices of resistance of Indigenous, *Campesinxs*, and African communities in the Andean region in Abya Yala, and Abya Yala scholars. Qualitative research offers an interesting site for a possible decolonial project, as we mentioned above, due to its already position of resistance against quantitative and positivistic research, and also due to its flexibility of knowledge by being a transdisciplinary practice, bringing together the coexistence of various traditions of thought from various disciplines.

We come to an end by spelling out our vernacular, urban, English and Spanglish ambitions, perhaps way out of our scope of infrastructure influence, to intentionally engage an initiative that may contribute to the possible construction of a decolonial option alongside qualitative research. According to Walsh and Mignolo (2018), decoloniality seeks to challenge the deniability of coexistence. For Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), decolonial possibilities are counterposed by the means of parallel coexistence of difference, which she articulates through the Aymara concept of *ch'ixi*. This term alludes to a notion of something that is and is not, at the same time, within a logic of an included third. For example, Rivera Cusicanqui illustrates this notion with the color gray, which is white but not white at the same time; it is both white and its opposite, black. It is a combination that never mixes but sustains difference as the energy from where learning is always happening, unlike the notion of hybridity or *mestizaje*, where the distinctions of difference are blurred into a seeming acculturation. Spanglish could be a similar example of *ch'ixi*, as languages that are not mixing but come together in a way that each can always be recognizable in its differences, being both antagonizing and complementary at the same time. These are conditions necessary for ongoing renewal in a decolonial project when differences come together.

Therefore, our attempts to challenge the Eurocentric Columbus ventriloquist aspects of *el* qualitative research that question legitimacy of knowledge when not abiding to the rigor of the method did not come from a naïve desire to eradicate a whole paradigm, but to construct different possibilities for parallel knowledge makings. As we insisted above, *nuestras* stories were not created out of method but political intention to denounce colonial structures of power incarnated in our lived experiences. We did so by being unfaithful to the mandated requirement of the method yet seeking for an audience that included researchers open to be troubled by the expressions of our humanity. In Mignolo's terms (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) we delinked ourselves from Eurocentric predominantly means of knowledge production in qualitative research.

Additionally, we intended through our intentional adoption of vernacular and Spanglish vocabularies otherwise cast out of scholarly and reputable scientific productions to engage a form of interculturality, which, according to Walsh (2009) is the means of decoloniality, which is yet to be constructed. For Walsh, interculturality is something other than respect, tolerance, or recognition of diversity. Rather, it is a social political project, whereby new conditions are created to transform a new social, economic, political, order of things in response to the exclusion, domination and inequality *de la colonialidad*. It creates an encounter of narratives that come from the otherwise. Therefore, we attempted to challenge the “textual petulancies...” (Liborio in Xilonen, 2015, p. 18) of the racializing and hierarchical narratives that classify a superior scientific, succinct rhetoric, on one hand, and an inferior everyday vernacular of the Liborios of the world, on the other. Agreeing with Liborio, “all books fucking wormify” if they continue Columbus ventriloquism; hence we wanted to “slow down their wormifications” (Xilonen, 2015, p. 18). We attempted to adopt both textual wormifying petulant and respectable

words as well as incendiary words much clearer that say everything in one fell shitkicker (Liborio in Xilonen, 2015)

Furthermore, we attempted to get down from the iCloud research bracket of the unobservable observer location. We revealed ourselves in our writings and painting; some of us shared experiences publicly for the first time. For Castro-Gómez (2010) this is an important element, to create the conditions for a decolonial project, whereby the location of enunciation of knowledge ought to be made evident and intricately embedded in what is produced. It contributes to the recognition of differences in intercultural encounters from where reciprocal translations are possible (de Sousa Santos, 2008) for the sustainability of *ch'ixi*.

Finally, our stance of resistance to not follow faithfully and unquestionably the superior parameters on how to produce “legitimate” knowledge via traditional research came about thanks to historicizing the colonial patterns of power within qualitative research. This made it possible for us to discern the colonial viral operating systems since colonialism and from where decoloniality came to exist. If coloniality/modernity would not exist, neither would decoloniality. Decoloniality is a response to coloniality. Historicizing made visible an option for us to acknowledge, address, and confront our positions from where we are either resisting or contributing, or both, to the colonial impoverishment of realities. It is also a necessary perspective to get closer to a decolonial option.

It is our hope to have contributed here through our stories and colonial/decolonial reflections to the deracialization of difference that dehumanizes us, as well as to emphasize, not only the importance of protecting storytellers integrity and story rights, but to reflect upon the social and political obligations evoked by stories (de Sousa Santos, 2014). This requires creating forms of knowledge, whereby the struggles of others are not rendered strange but familiar and closely related to our own experiences—*su sangre es nuestra sangre*. In this manner, our duty of response is recruited to find options, decolonial, postcolonial, poststructural, postmodern, critical, etc., for North and South, Center and Periphery, Superior and Inferior to come together to eradicate these very same dehumanizing lines that have succeeded in very profitable ways for the very few over 500 years.

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