

Decolonising the University

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Decolonising Philosophy

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The persistence of the small number of philosophers and theorists of colour in the academy, both inside and outside philosophy departments, who critically engage questions of coloniality, inequalities, decolonisation and liberation, has contributed to keep the question of the decolonisation of philosophy relevant. Some of them have taken the lead in the creation of new institutional spaces and organisms, including programmes to train students of colour in philosophy, groups in large professional associations, book series and scholarly journals and even new organisations such as Philosophy Born of Struggle or the Caribbean Philosophical Association, to name only two of the most visible. Philosophers of colour in the academy also tend to engage in various forms of teaching and mentoring that prepare new generations of students in expanding the horizons of academic philosophy and in pursuing the decolonisation of the field.

While these and other efforts have been crucial in the introduction and cultivation of new readings and subfields in some philosophy departments and professional associations, it will be difficult to contest the idea that, generally speaking, philosophy as a field or a discipline in modern Western universities remains a bastion of Eurocentrism, whiteness in general, and white heteronormative male structural privilege and superiority in particular. One only has to look at curricular design and content, the overwhelming absence of people of colour in classrooms and philosophical reading lists despite the existence of a few, and to the criteria for merit and promotion in the field. It is no secret either, that this state of affairs is part of the legacy of Western imperialism, racialised slavery, white heteronormative male supremacy, and segregation, which highly elevated the value of civilisation and abstract universality, and exclusively

linked them with concepts, norms and values that were considered to be of European provenance.

Because philosophy is grounded on and advances a particular arrangement of power/knowledge, it is not enough to argue that the solution to the above-mentioned issues lies in simply diversifying the field. Failing to address structural problems and deep-seated habits, diversity and inclusion strategies tend to make, at best, only a superficial impact, often putting the very people that they seek to 'help' in vulnerable positions and in peril. Because the problem is deep and widespread, and it involves other fields and institutions, not to mention established rankings, the celebrations of diversity and inclusion achievements of any given institution based on comparisons with others are often as deceiving as they are self-serving. The result is the eternal return of crisis and the ongoing production of a perverse circle that, at its most successful, leads to unending liberal interventions that make little to no difference or that make the problem worse.

In face of the eternal return of crisis and the perverse circle of Eurocentrism and white normativity, it becomes all the more necessary not simply to diversify philosophy, but to decolonise it. This involves addressing the Eurocentrism and the white male heteronormative foundations of the field, as well as the attitudes, institutional orders and day-to-day practices that allow Eurocentrism and white male heteronormativity to dominate the discipline. Far from simply diversifying philosophy and 'including' people of colour in it, decolonising philosophy requires a decolonial turn that touches on all the various aspects of philosophy as a field and as a practice.

Based on Maldonado-Torres's formulation of the term, we conceive the decolonial turn as a form of liberating and decolonising reason beyond the liberal and Enlightened emancipation of rationality, and beyond the more radical Euro-critiques that have failed to consistently challenge the legacies of Eurocentrism and white male heteronormativity (often Eurocentric critiques of Eurocentrism).¹ Otherwise put, the decolonial turn seeks to overcome hierarchies that impede true rigour and excellence in philosophical thinking. We complement Maldonado-Torres's account of the decolonial turn in philosophy, theory and critique by providing an analysis of the trajectories of academic philosophy and clarifying the relevance of decolonising philosophy and of the decolonial turn for current efforts in transforming philosophy in face of the challenges of social movements such as the Third World Liberation Front and Black

Lives Matter in the United States, and Rhodes Must Fall in South Africa and England.

After a brief analysis of the trajectory and current status of philosophy as a discipline in the modern Western research university, we provide examples of the decolonial turn and of decolonising philosophy in three areas: the engagement with (1) Asian and (2) Latin American philosophies, and (3) debates in the philosophy of race and gender. To be sure, any serious effort to decolonise philosophy cannot be satisfied with simply adding new areas to an existing arrangement of power/knowledge, leaving the Eurocentric norms that define the field as a whole in place, or reproducing such norms themselves. For example, when engaging in non-European philosophies it is important to avoid reproducing problematic conceptions of time, space and subjectivity that are embedded in the Eurocentric definition of European philosophy and its many avatars. For this reason, Asia and Latin America here are not presented as continental others of Europe, but as constructed categories and projects that themselves need to be decolonised. For us, Asia and Latin America are not mere objects of study or non-problematic sites that serve as a ground for reflection, but spatio-temporal configurations that are part of modernity/coloniality.² Likewise, we also approach race and gender not only as constructed social realities, but also as constructed categories themselves within what Latina philosopher María Lugones has called the colonial/modern gender system.³ Decolonising philosophy includes the critical examination of the dominant presuppositions about all these and other basic concepts in the search for a decolonial and post-continental mode of thinking, philosophy, and critique.

Trajectories of disciplinary philosophy and the decolonial turn

Philosophy is not the only field that has to contend with the legacy of and continued investment in Eurocentrism and white male heteronormativity. The entire arrangement of the liberal arts and sciences arguably has to as well. But philosophy seems to have a special place among discourses in the liberal arts because it focuses on the roots of the university at large: reason. This includes providing criteria for identifying and demarcating the humanities, the natural sciences and the social sciences, as well as for distinguishing reason from faith, secularism from religion, and the 'primitive' and the ancient from the modern. These are central columns in the edifice that sustains modern Western rationality and the modern

Western university. The modern Western research university and liberal arts therefore owe much of their basic conceptual infrastructure to philosophical formulations of rationality, universalism, subjectivity, the relationship between the subject and object, truth and method – all of which become relevant targets of critical analysis in the decolonial turn.

It is arguably not rare, then, for philosophers to see themselves as custodians of Western critique and rationality, and with it, the Western university, especially the arts and sciences. Non-Western forms of theory and philosophy are kept out of philosophy canons and, at most, become objects of study in other fields. For example, Indigenous thought is barely recognised as philosophy and it is confined to the realm of spirituality or culture, available for study by the religious studies scholar or the anthropologist. In the United States, even those who focus on American philosophy tend to conflate this area with US pragmatism and, when not, they typically fail to question the coloniality embedded in the category of 'America.' For us, any effort to engage Indigenous theory and philosophy in the United States requires the simultaneous decolonisation of philosophy and of the idea of 'America.' While we cannot do justice to this area in this context, we hope that the reflections here contribute to a further elaboration of the imperative to critically address the approach to Indigenous thought as part of the effort to decolonise philosophy and knowledge at large.

To be sure, in the current neoliberal times, philosophy, along with a good number of other humanities and social sciences, no longer occupies the position it enjoyed when the modern Western research university was in the process of securing a space of its own in the West. At that time, coming out of the European Enlightenment, philosophy, the newly defined humanities and the emerging social sciences were extremely valuable in addressing the needs of nation-states and empires in the process of construction or expansion.⁴ Today, many academics still try to defend the relevance of philosophy and the humanities by appealing to their contributions to the liberal nation-state and to the idea of cultivating civility and good citizenship. As good as this may sound, these efforts arguably reflect what one could refer to as a decadent attitude that fails to address the problems of the liberal and racial nation-state and its links to the liberal arts and sciences.⁵

There is also failure in missing the opportunity to make philosophy and the humanities relevant, not for the problematic task of trying to put a limit on neoliberalism, or to domesticate it, but for decolonising the

world. Since this task involves the very decolonisation of philosophy and of the humanities, many remain invested in these areas and in the liberal project of trying to save them from the onslaught of privatisation and neoliberalism rather than take on the challenge of decolonising them. And because they rightly oppose neoliberalism, the liberal defenders of the humanities obtain a sense of satisfaction that obscures the problematic dimensions of liberalism, along with the liberal arts and sciences. When it is satisfied with contributing to, rather than critically examining, this defence of liberalism and the liberal arts and sciences, philosophy becomes, or rather continues its service as, the handmaiden of the racial liberal state.

But modern Western philosophy has not always been functional with regard to the liberal order. It has also participated in its critique. Important waves of philosophical critique took place throughout the nineteenth century and especially in the mid-twentieth century after the spread of Fascism in Europe and two world wars. However, while European philosophers learned and benefited from the critical voices that called for decolonisation in the Third World at that time,⁶ they overwhelmingly chose to limit the scope of their reflections and only see Europe or the Western classical ancient world as relevant for thinking. By taking various philosophical turns (the transcendental turn, the linguistic turn and the phenomenological turn, among others) within the horizons of Western modernity, they effectively evaded active and engaging participation in a larger decolonial turn that took place primarily in the emerging 'Third World' – including the Third World inside Western metropolises – that challenged modernity/coloniality. Instead, the work of the more critical European philosophers tended to become part of a Cold War dispute between philosophical orientations that were considered to be aligned with Marxism, on the one hand, and philosophical approaches that sought refuge in scientific models, logics and mathematics, on the other. From then on, academic philosophy became strongly divided between 'continental' and 'analytic' philosophical camps.

The divide between continental and analytic philosophy became particularly acute in the United States, which after the Second World War became a new global hegemon as much with respect to its military power as to the academy. It was in the United States that McCarthyism reigned supreme for a period in the 1950s, having tremendous impact in politics as well as in cultural production and the academy. As John McCumber has shown, in the context of the Cold War, McCarthyism played a key

role in getting rid of philosophers who questioned capitalism with their socio-historical analyses, and in motivating the assertion of an analytic model of philosophy which kept the field away from socio-political issues and closer to mathematics and the natural sciences.⁷ This situation favoured the growth of what were presumed to be apolitical and non-ideological philosophical orientations, which does not mean that analytic philosophy is inherently apolitical or that it cannot contribute to ideology critique. This led to or confirmed the minority position of specialists in continental philosophy in philosophy departments, who sometimes had to find other institutional homes. This migration contributed to the popularity of 'theory' in the US humanities in the last part of the Cold War. To be sure, much of this 'theory', along with the continental philosophy taught in philosophy departments, was largely Eurocentric, even as it began to be used for projects that questioned Eurocentrism.

Academic philosophy during the Cold War therefore seemed positioned between the Scylla of McCarthyism and the Charybdis of Eurocentrism. The significance of this situation should not be underestimated as it took place in the context where philosophical ideas that were critical of banners of the liberal nation-state, such as rationality and freedom, were spreading in multiple parts of the globe. College youth turned out to have an important role in questioning power dynamics worldwide during the 1960s and 1970s, and some philosophical works became powerful weapons in their hands. The struggles in the growing hegemonic philosophy departments, disciplined by McCarthyism and Eurocentrism, made academic philosophy less useful than it could have been in the process of producing generations of students who sought to critically engage the world. As a result, many students were forced to do philosophy outside of philosophy departments, and the more radical among them (e.g. the Black youth that created the Black Student Union in the US, and the Third World Liberation Front at San Francisco State University and the University of California Berkeley, among others) struggled to create new, non-Eurocentric, academic units. These spaces, often considered to be from a racist point of view no more than bastions of narrow identity politics or expressions of liberal multiculturalism, have served as engines for non-Eurocentric philosophy and critique.

Today we find ourselves in a peculiar context: we are no longer in the moment of Enlightened opposition to tradition wherein philosophical

critique is considered central; nor are we in the context of continued liberal nation-state formation and imperial expansion, wherein the liberal arts and sciences function as handmaidens of the state. The Cold War period of increasing dominance of scientific conceptions of philosophy in the context of growing US hegemony is also in the past. Today we find an increasingly interconnected world with massively disproportionate patterns of wealth, accelerated migration flows, and racist nativist attitudes that question the very category of 'facts'. Consider that, while philosophical pretensions of scientificism during the Cold War could have generated a significant degree of legitimacy for the field of philosophy in the struggle to keep left-wing ideology and related forms of critical analysis at bay, pretensions of scientificism these days are increasingly taken as forms of elitism by populist right-wing forces that question the validity of science and facts.

Overwhelmingly in our times, philosophy, along with the humanities, finds itself caught in a seeming opposition, which in fact is a spectrum, between the neoliberal erosion of liberal ideas of collective goods, which cannot be separated from racism, on the one hand, and racist nativist populism, on the other, which tends to combine racist views of collectivities with ideas about purely individual investment and success that are central in neoliberalism. The first, neoliberalism, questions forms of thinking and creating that do not contribute to privatisation, profit maximisation and corporate efficiency, while the second, nativist populism, questions the value of anything that undermines or even relativises the ideas and values perceived as central to the nativist view of the nation.

All along, however, philosophy has faced the challenge of quite different voices which have raised questions about the meaning and significance of colonialism and decolonisation as central to an engagement with the modern/colonial world. These voices seek not only to enrich philosophy, but also to make it relevant to the planet at large. Instead of keeping academic philosophy sequestered by liberalism and Eurocentric leftist perspectives, or menaced by neoliberalism and nativism, the decolonial turn involves a dramatic opening and transformation of philosophy. It is an encounter with various forms of theorising and critique that helps everyone in the task of creating a world where dehumanisation, genocide and the early death of specific populations are not considered or effectively operate as a norm.

*Decolonising philosophy and theory in and through Asia*⁸

This section reflects on decolonising philosophy and theory in and through 'Asia' by tracing notable contributions from East Asian thinkers and by suggesting challenges that must be considered in the task of decolonising philosophy. In doing so, this section avers that 'the geography of reason' (to borrow the Caribbean Philosophical Association's coinage)⁹ in and through Asia is exhausted neither by the discipline of philosophy nor by a selective inclusion of only the cultural aspects of a presumed 'Asian' identity in academic projects. The section is limited to East Asian references and is far from representing the entirety of conundrums faced by decolonial struggles in the heterogeneous area that is Asia.¹⁰ The East Asian context, however, is sure to resonate with such struggles in other areas placed outside of the West.

Decolonising philosophy in and through Asia requires understanding the significance of the history of Asian thought in the present. East Asian thinkers such as Sun Ge (China) and Ch'a Sŭng-gi (South Korea) have addressed how Asians have theorised and could theorise Asia by tracing genealogies of Eastern thought. On the question of the meanings 'Asia' produces, Sun Ge asks:

What does Asia imply? As a member of Asia, it is not merely due to the need to respond to the voices of the post-colonial intellectuals in the West that we reflect on Asia. On the contrary, whether Asia should be taken as a perspective of instrumental value, and on which level the question of Asia should be broached, is of concern to our own history. On the basis of this, we would ask: is Asia merely a question for the Japanese or other neighbouring East Asian countries? To the Chinese who, for a century, have not established any relation of partnership with the Japanese, what does Asia mean?¹¹

Sun's question reflects three important aspects relevant to this section's considerations. First, the question of what Asia means directly concerns the historical realities of those who pose this question, beyond the invitation and inclusion from the West. Second, Asia is not a monolithic reality and therefore, attempts to define Asia have different meanings and significances depending on who asks the question and from what position. Third, imperialism and colonialism have had a significant impact on the discourse regarding Asia and on the relationship among

Asian countries. This is evinced as much in the profound impact of Japanese imperialism and Japan's history of fascism in the region, as in projects of nation-state formation and Cold War reordering, to name only some of the more evident examples.

In spite of, or perhaps precisely for these reasons, Sun argues that contemporary Asian thinkers must overcome both the present rhetoric of easy commercial globalisation and hasty erasures of different kinds of Asianism by post-Second World War progressives and leftists alike. Asian thinkers, Sun proffers, must undertake the difficult task of probing both Asia as an idea (i.e. history of thought, philosophy and ideals of different Pan-Asianisms) and Asia as a history and a region (i.e. knowledge produced by the disciplines of history, regional studies and the social sciences). Taking Japan as an example, this means a deep understanding of the contexts, positions and philosophical questions of Japanese thinkers of Asianism in the past is needed, such as those of Okakura Tenshin, Watsuji Tetsuro, Miyazaki Ichisada and Takeuchi Yoshimi. Without a methodical investigation into how different disciplines and lines of thought emerged in Japan in relation to the Asia question, contemporary questions on Asia posed by Asian thinkers as a 'perspective of instrumental value'¹² reify the modern/colonial construction of time and space.

In a comparable step, Ch'a Sŭng-gi (South Korea) alerts one to the philosophical engagements of Asian thinkers with modernity and Asia in the early twentieth century, to emphasise the role tradition has served as an imaginative methodology. Ch'a has analysed colonial-era (mostly from the 1930s and 1940s) Korean anti-modern thoughts' 'criticalities' (the Korean word from which this is translated is closest in meaning to the sense used in physics, describing the boundary at which a phenomenon splits into multiple phenomena). In this analysis, Ch'a examines how 'Asian' and 'Korean' traditions and value were multiply re-signified in relation to the changing understandings of the modern world order. Ch'a's work highlights the creative ways in which Korean thinkers and writers such as Lee Byŏng-gi and Jŏng Ji-yong formed a critical relation to the coloniality of their present by seeing the problems of the present through the 'eyes of the past', rather than seeing the past from the anthropological perspective of the present.¹³ The past that they conceived was not a moment that has passed or that was fixed at a distance but was continuously repeated enactments in the present. Through the practice of poetic meditation – a traditional practice reclaimed to enable becoming

beyond the present – these thinkers imagined alternatives to the modern/colonial time-space.

As Japanese imperialism intensified with the advent of the Pacific War, imperial Pan-Asianism emerged as another universalism that competed with the universalism of Western modernity. Japanese Pan-Asian multiculturalism codified the colony's irreducible distance from the metropole as the colony's 'local colour'. At the same time, it re-spatialised Asia as a homogeneous entity in order to justify Japan's imperial militarism as a step towards a world freed of modernity's colonial burdens (*gendai* in Japanese, *hyundae* in Korean) as espoused by the Kyoto school 'historical philosophers'.¹⁴ In this context, Korean intellectuals' assertion of the temporality of tradition and the past, or of the persistence of temporalities that exceed the linear-progressive temporality of modernity, serve as critiques of the binary universalisms that justified Western and Japanese imperialism.¹⁵ For Ch'a, the critique and enactments surrounding tradition and the past borne out of these contestations continue to bear philosophical significance for the liberation struggles of the present moment.

As the works of Sun and Ch'a demonstrate, decolonising philosophy in and through Asia requires both inter-Asian and interdisciplinary conversations, but not without potential entrapments at every turn. From this perspective, any attempt to 'represent' or encapsulate Asian philosophy or thought in modules that can be unquestioningly delivered as a fixed canon, is problematically inadequate, and yet this often occurs in East–West dialogues. The Inter-Asia project in which Sun Ge (China) and Chen Kuan-Hsing (Taiwan) participate, and similar endeavours, are attentive to what Kwōn Myōng-a (South Korea) has criticised as the tendency in contemporary East Asian scholarship to overlook the ways in which globalisation consolidates marginalised and regionalised subjectivities under transnational refashionings.¹⁶ Such overviews are complicit with sub-imperialism or South–South imperialism, such as East Asian enterprise for cheap labour and resources in South East Asia and Africa.¹⁷ Chen Kuan-Hsing has similarly offered a critical examination of the ways in which the Western academy erases local thinkers by privileging the voices of diasporic, multicultural and metropolitan post-colonial thinkers instead.¹⁸ Critical endeavours to decolonise thought across borders must therefore continuously contest different institutions' reordering of knowledge which simultaneously represent and exclude in order to sustain the colonial circuits of knowledge production.¹⁹

This institutional pull to re-order knowledge production concerns not only one's interlocutors and one's methodology, but also the object of inquiry itself; Eastern philosophy (as opposed to 'Western philosophy': these are the categories of philosophy deployed in some parts of East Asia) is a minoritised field of knowledge through the colonial difference²⁰ even in the East Asian academy, yet it is still necessary to identify and *divest* Eastern philosophy of its colonial investments. 'Eastern philosophy' circulates *as if* colonial investments *did not* shape the genealogy itself. Overcoming the limit of its selective intellectual history is an engagement with its multiple erasures, such as the erasure of peripheralised parts of Asia in the process of consolidating the 'Eastern' tradition and the impact of the Cold War on the development of this tradition. Lauding, generalising and sampling a pre-constructed Eastern philosophy only satisfies the multiculturalist logic of inclusion rather than dismantling the colonial circuit of knowledge.

One necessary and transformative direction to pursue in order to decolonise philosophy in and through Asia is to challenge the construct of Asia itself in relation to the question of Indigeneity. What have been the integrations and erasures of Indigenous modes of thought in 'Eastern philosophy', and how do the challenges posed by Native people to the meaning of sovereignty change the genealogies and questions currently asked by thinkers dwelling on the Asia question?²¹ Examinations of settler-colonialism in the East Asian context have emerged in the form of settler-colonialism studies in history and anthropology²² and in the field of Transpacific studies,²³ which engages with Indigenous knowledge productions as political and philosophical agents. This paradigm shift needs to be substantiated in the broader field of Asian studies and Asian philosophy. Indigenous peoples of East Asia and the Pacific have been fundamental and continued subjects of colonial rule. Many of them live with the high concentration of militarisation formed during the Cold War that remains in the region, which entails that they inordinately pay for the material, ecological, and biopolitical costs of securitisation.²⁴ Those engaging with the question of the meaning and significance of Asia and striving to decolonise philosophy, need to further wrestle with the modern/colonial legacy of scepticism towards the validity of popular and Indigenous socio-political movements on the ground as knowledge production.

These questions and reflections are typically placed outside the horizon of efforts to 'include' Asia in the discipline of philosophy. The

decolonisation of philosophy in and through Asia requires something else: a sustained engagement, not only with academic philosophers in Asia, some of whom presuppose Eurocentric approaches to philosophy as the norm, but also with thinkers who critically engage the question ‘what is Asia?’ and ‘how can Asia be decolonised?’ in relation to local histories and the *longue durée* of modernity/coloniality worldwide.

*Latin American liberation philosophy:
reflections on Enrique Dussel's Analectics*

If ‘America’ is a geopolitical imaginary construct and a project of European colonial powers as Europeans sought to conquer the ‘New World’, ‘Latin America’ could be considered a project of creole elites that from its inception sought the reproduction of European institutions and values via the elimination of Indigenous populations and the exploitative use of African peoples brought in as slave labour.²⁵ European colonisation thus not only precedes the formation of ‘Latin America’, but is also the principal condition of possibility for it to emerge. This means that European institutions, including universities, have been present in Latin America all throughout its history, and they continue to exist today as strong bastions of coloniality.

Unsurprisingly, Latin American philosophers have not been well represented in academic philosophy, even in Latin America. Part of the reason for this is because Latin American philosophers overwhelmingly write in Spanish and Portuguese, languages which fell from grace as worthy of philosophical reflection just as the Spanish and Portuguese empires started to fall from hegemony within the geopolitical struggles of the modern world-system. There is also the fact that philosophical production in Latin America is often looked at as if it is either too indistinguishable from European thought, although dependent and inferior, or too different and exotic (especially Indigenous philosophies), to the point where it is not taken as legitimate philosophy. For this reason, the question of whether there is a Latin American philosophy has been an important one in the region.²⁶

We cannot rehearse the debate about the existence of philosophy in Latin America here. Our interest in this context is rather the indifference of mainstream academic philosophy to the topic of Latin American philosophy, though sometimes granting that there is some kind of distinct philosophy in order to satisfy liberal calls for the diversifica-

tion of established canons. This liberal approach, we argue, is a form of co-optation that treats non-Western knowledges as tokens that are expected to conform and avoid threatening the modern/colonial epistemic status of philosophy and the university in general. In this section, we wish to explore ways to decolonise philosophy by seriously engaging the radicality of 'Latin American' thought, while also taking into serious consideration the coloniality embedded in the very idea of Latin America. Given the limited extent of this chapter, we will consider contributions from one philosopher of liberation whose work has been greatly influential in the critique of Eurocentrism and the exploration of South–South philosophical debates. He also happens to be the most prolific Latin American philosopher to date: the Argentine-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel.

The project of liberation philosophy (*filosofía de la liberación*), as articulated in Dussel's work is a concrete attempt to decolonise philosophy, which has also been described as a major project in the decolonial turn.²⁷ Liberation philosophy begins by deflating the pretended universalism of modern Western philosophy, placing the latter within an anthropological history of the development of the planet's thought-systems.²⁸ Additionally, Dussel connects the history of modern Western philosophy to the unfolding of the modern/colonial world. If modern Western philosophy claims to begin with René Descartes' reflections on the *ego cogito*, Dussel locates this particular contribution within the existential horizon of Europe's *ego conquiro*, the ethico-political presupposition that – from the 'Reconquista' of Al-Andalus and the encounter with Tainos in 1492 to the conquest of Aztec and Incan civilisations in the early sixteenth century – led a Christian Spanish empire out of its provincial status vis-à-vis the Muslim world.²⁹ The genesis of modern Western philosophy thus requires an investigation into its historical conditions of possibility, which includes an examination of conceptions of world and self that are tied to the idea of 'discovery', the justification of conquest and the naturalisation of slavery.

Liberation philosophy posits that without a serious attempt to dwell in the constitutive outside of modernity, philosophy as a mode of thinking (whether inside or outside of the university) would remain not only Eurocentric but also colonialist. It is important to clarify, however, that this move to think outside of modernity is not for the sake of dropping anchor in a pure position of exteriority. Against any problematic desire for purity, liberation philosophy simply seeks to think from

the site which most obviously and directly experiences the philosophical discourse of modernity as a discourse of colonisation³⁰ in order to transcend the totalising project of modernity/coloniality. This task does not require the constant policing of disciplinary boundaries, as is typically the case in Eurocentric philosophy. If an example of the latter includes the self-referential *dialectics* of modernity, which assimilate the world as they expand their totalising domination from within the rhetoric of modernity, like Hegel's philosophy of history,³¹ then the method of liberation philosophy is instead an *analectics* of the underside of modernity.

For Dussel, who coined the term, analectics entail a rupturing (from the rhetoric of modernity) affirmation (by and within those negated subjects) aimed towards the transformation of the modern/colonial totality to bring forth nothing less than a new world.³² If dialectics have been deployed to challenge the internal contradictions of modernity, then they have also presupposed modernity's own ontological horizon by not dislodging its logic of identity and difference.³³ In other words, the point of departure for dialectics is internal to the rhetoric of modernity itself. Dialectics thus do not entail a real transformation of consciousness and of the world, but only the affirmation of an identity that is presumed as always-already existing. Analectics, on the other hand, dislodge the logic of identity and difference in their entirety by refusing the self-referential terms set by such rhetoric of modernity. Analectics' point of departure is not an already recognised identity with internal contradictions, but instead the zone of violence and ontological erasure, the colonial world, which the totalising system of Western modernity does *not* recognise as worthy of philosophical reflection.

This is not to say that liberation philosophy negates any potential critical rationality in modernity and its dialectics. Rather, liberation philosophy seeks to subsume such rationality into a more ample framework while negating the irrational and violent colonial side of modernity. A critical effort to depart from the underside of modernity would thus supplement any negative dialectics ('the negation of the negation') with 'the affirmation of the Exteriority of the Other', which carries with it the possibility of a truly *other* world.³⁴ This is the constitutive moment of the analectic method, which requires a pedagogical transformation, *knowing how to listen* to the 'revealing' word of this Other beyond the system, a lived face-to-face praxis that cannot be expressed through the language of the existing system.³⁵ To be sure, the other world called upon is posited not

in the univocal universalist way through which the myth of modernity projects its own vision, but in a pluriversal horizon that rethinks the concept of universality itself.³⁶ Articulating a critique of modernity by affirming its underside, liberation philosophy thus surpasses the limitations of the philosophical discourse of modernity (the fact that its own dialectics are monological and not dialogical) in a way that also goes beyond the Eurocentrism of (post)modernity, which often is sceptical of rational discourses in their entirety while at the same time limiting the categories of rational discourse and universality to Europe. Performing a rupturing shift in the geography of reason,³⁷ liberation philosophy effectively calls for a *transmodern* horizon that does not discard reason but instead seeks its co-realisation through those subjects that experience modernity *as* coloniality.³⁸

Liberation philosophy's engagement with the theory of the Frankfurt School serves as an example of the analectic method. Not seeking to fully reject the contributions of this community of thinkers for its Eurocentrism, liberation philosophy retains what is useful for a decolonial project while dispensing with pernicious Eurocentrisms and their related burdens. Taken from the first generation of the Frankfurt School, an emphasis on materiality (as the 'affirmation of living corporeality') and negativity (the negation of suffering), are central to the currents of liberation philosophy.³⁹ From the second generation of the Frankfurt School, liberation philosophy retains the turn towards discursivity and intersubjectivity (lacking in the first generation). Liberation philosophy therefore retains what is useful from both the first and second generations of the Frankfurt School. Notably, it does not dispense with negative materiality, which the leading second-generation Frankfurt School thinkers – like Jürgen Habermas – have problematically discarded in the name of a procedural formalism. And against the 'ontological Eurocentrism' of the Frankfurt School (including the third generation), liberation philosophy highlights the moment of exclusion within discursivity, the exteriority of any community of communication that launches liberatory praxis.⁴⁰ Additionally, liberation philosophy harnesses the critical discursivity of the excluded against the totalising dominant community. Far from denying the contributions of the Frankfurt School in a reactionary fashion, liberation philosophy critically approaches it from a different geopolitical and epistemological position. Liberation philosophy aims to dispense with the Frankfurt School's coloniality and subsume what is useful from it (e.g. materiality, negativity, discursivity and inter-

subjectivity) within a decolonial and transmodern horizon towards a non-Eurocentric *'critical philosophy with global validity'*.⁴¹ This is one brief example of how the categorical and methodological framework presented by liberation philosophy should prove useful for those seeking the decolonisation of philosophy at distinct levels of abstraction.

To be sure, the case of liberation philosophy is just one among many critical projects that pursue the decolonisation not just of philosophy, but of all thought and life. Part of why liberation philosophy is so critical in its attempts to decolonise philosophy, however, is that it dislodges the centrality of Eurocentric philosophy from the very start. This is the moment of 'delinking'⁴² or rupture that prevents the project of liberation philosophy from collapsing into a version of the liberal 'inclusion of the Other' paradigm of what is already considered 'philosophy'. Instead, liberation philosophy calls for the transformation of what philosophy is from the very start. Within the globalised modern Western research university, this means that departments of philosophy have to do much more than diversify their canons in order to get rid of their modern/colonial inheritances. A meta-philosophical re-drawing of its own being requires that philosophical discourse engage in an open dialogue with other geographies of reason, including other disciplines within the university, which have, in many ways, already been philosophising, such as ethnic studies and women and gender studies. In this sense, philosophy needs to learn to listen to the revealing views and words of those who have been considered outside of the scope of theory and reason. The decolonisation of philosophy, which is taking place alongside simultaneous decolonial efforts across disciplinary boundaries, ultimately points to the decolonisation of the university itself as a site of knowledge production. This is a transdisciplinary struggle, which will no doubt change everyone involved in the process. And yet, this epistemic struggle itself is only a small part of the broader transmodern impetus to create, as the Zapatistas from south-east Mexico say, a new world in which many worlds can fit.

Decolonising philosophical approaches to race and gender

The decolonial turn invites a critique of modernity/coloniality within the epistemic paradigms governing theories of gender and race as practised in philosophy. Identifying and critically analysing the Enlightenment concepts on which feminist theory and philosophies of race are

built – concepts like justice, equality and rights – decolonial thought (re-)imagines the potential of transmodern engagements (Dussel) with race and gender. Decolonial thought utilises genealogies critical of colonialism in order to imagine alternative horizons for gender and race theories.

Philosophical approaches to race and gender have historically focused on a politics of redistribution and recognition as potential sites of critical social intervention. For example, feminist theorists Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray and bell hooks, to name just a few, have focused their respective critiques of patriarchy on the lack of recognition extended to women. In *The Second Sex* de Beauvoir argues that society reduces women to their biological sex and in so doing recognises only their reproductive potential.⁴³ Women's liberation in this account is represented as the social recognition of women as project-making beings capable of engaging in projects of transcendence. Irigaray's politics of recognition takes issue with canonical and masculinist philosophical theories as well as the underlying tension of sexual difference on which these traditions rest.⁴⁴ bell hooks' early work, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, criticises second wave feminism for excluding black women in the very conception of womanhood, which resulted in a failure to recognise the unique oppressions faced by women of colour.⁴⁵ Restricted by the power/knowledge arrangement of philosophy from the mid to late twentieth century, these interrogations into race and gender remain limited in their respective critiques of the liberal order. By focusing upon the liberatory goals of recognition and redistribution, these philosophies of race and gender were quickly subsumed by the overarching liberal order and diverted from their original aims of decolonising theory and power within philosophy.

As part of the ongoing growth of the decolonial turn, among related movements, the legacies of colonial forms of redistribution and recognition in the academy have been extended by thinkers who have a more explicit critique of liberalism. Here one can list figures such as Linda Martín Alcoff,⁴⁶ Sylvia Wynter and Lewis Gordon.⁴⁷ They and theorists with similar orientations have developed socio-political theories concerned with race, ethnicity and gender without limiting their accounts to either liberation as mere recognition or to liberal conceptions of identity.⁴⁸ They also challenge the standard conceptualisation and separation of gender and race, inviting us to conceive decolonial thought in terms of what Sylvia Wynter has aptly termed the 'demonic

ground' outside of our present mode of being/feeling/knowing.⁴⁹ Consideration of the 'demonic ground' is an activity that becomes crucial in the decolonial turn because it includes a meta-critique of colonialist epistemic paradigms, which is missing in mainstream analytic and continental philosophy as well as in white feminisms.

Wynter's article, 'Afterword: Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the "Demonic Ground" of Caliban's "Woman"', is a concrete example of a distinctly decolonial engagement with gender and race. Notably this decolonial intervention does not begin with an either/or. Using a critical genealogy of history, Wynter's analysis is one step removed from sexual or racial difference as essential difference. According to Wynter, the primary antagonism that has shaped society since the sixteenth century is not 'male' versus 'female' but 'man' versus 'native/nigger'.⁵⁰ The 'primary code of difference' does not break down in terms of a single binary like sameness and difference. In this alternative schema, 'Man' represents a new secular shift towards rationality. The category 'Man' includes, first and foremost, rational beings. In this schema, women, specifically white women, are grouped in the dominant social category, which stands in opposition to the native, who is regarded as irrational or even arational. According to Wynter's decolonial genealogy, since the sixteenth century, racial/cultural difference – what Mignolo refers to as the colonial difference – represents the primary category of social distinction internal to which there are a series of other dichotomies, including sexual difference.

Wynter's account of social difference is not, as it might first appear, a simple reordering of the all too familiar identity categories belonging to philosophies of race and of feminist theories. Wynter does not, for example, prioritise race over gender or vice versa.⁵¹ Instead, by grouping the racial and cultural together (i.e. racial/cultural), Wynter sidesteps the tendencies of simple rankings. Colonial difference means that white European men represent the ordering principle around which the social is structured. However, insofar as Man stands in opposition to 'native/nigger', the former also includes white, European, women. Already we can see that a politics of representation has become complicated. There is no single narrative of equality. White women, for example, embody the dominant cultural/racial category to the extent that they are European and white (and Christian and rational, at least in comparison to the 'native' and even more radically and primal for Wynter, the 'nigger'). In contrast to men, however, they still fall short of the ideal

within the dominant ordering logic because they fail to *fully* embody rationality. Conversely, the struggle for women of colour – the struggle of Caliban’s woman – is a struggle around the racial/cultural/rational. In Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Caliban’s woman is not only absent from the play, and therefore absent from the competition of erotic desire, but she is also structurally and ontologically absent in a way that makes the represented symbolic order of desire, of culture, and of rationality possible. As Wynter states, ‘the absence of Caliban’s woman, is an absence which is functional to the new secularizing schema by which the peoples of Western Europe legitimated their global expansion as well as their expropriation and/their [sic] marginalisation of all the other population-groups of the globe.’⁵² Wynter’s account suggests that a politics of representation, a politics that governs at least some important sectors of contemporary feminist theories and philosophies of race, is impossible within coloniality’s symbolic order because this order depends upon the ontological exclusion of Caliban’s woman, that is, the native’s female companion.

Using Wynter’s critical genealogy as described above, a potential method of decolonial feminist and anti-racist thought becomes clear. A decolonial approach seeks to ‘de-code the system of meaning of that other discourse [whether the dominant discourse of the status quo or the critical discourses of feminist theory and philosophy of race], which has imposed this mode of silence for some five centuries.’⁵³ Decolonial thought goes beyond voicing the silenced narratives of Caliban’s woman. Decolonial thought is a double movement that, on the one hand, seeks to unearth the demonic ground that makes the symbolic order possible, and on the other, erects new discursive horizons from the standpoint of coloniality’s underside.

Wynter’s intervention demonstrates the point made in a previous section: that decolonising philosophy is not fundamentally about diversifying established canons by including certain authors or themes in the discipline. Decolonising philosophy is a form of reflection that emerges from intellectual, social, artistic and related movements that challenge colonisation and that seek to advance decolonisation. For academic philosophy, this means that any effort towards diversifying the discipline needs to be prefaced by serious consideration of the complex, non-binary interrelations between subject positions (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, ability) and their entanglement in modernity/coloniality. This means that diversification cannot take place without

decolonisation. Likewise, the struggle against exclusion in academic philosophy demands decolonisation, which involves the critical interrogation of existing efforts of liberal inclusion and the terms and criteria used therein. This process involves the meta-philosophical exercise of critically engaging various categories of analysis, including basic geopolitical terms (the West, Asia, Latin America), basic philosophical concepts (reason, universality, dialectics), and basic objects of social analysis (race and gender). That some of the key figures involved in decolonial thinking are often not recognised as philosophers illustrates the nature of the challenge. Fortunately, neither decolonisation nor critique nor thinking have never depended strictly upon academic philosophy. But academic philosophy could find more ways to contribute to these tasks if it seriously engages in its own critique and decolonisation. This chapter aims to be an effort, among many other efforts in myriad places and spaces, in this direction.

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Notes

1. On the decolonial turn see Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2017) 'The Decolonial Turn', in Juan Poblete (ed.) *New Approaches to Latin American Studies: Culture and Power*. London: Routledge, pp. 111–27; Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2011a) 'Enrique Dussel's Liberation Thought in the Decolonial Turn', *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(1): 1–30; Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2011b) 'Thinking through the Decolonial Turn: Post-continental Interventions in Theory, Philosophy, and Critique – An Introduction', *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(2): 1–15.
2. Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2006) 'Toward a Critique of Continental Reason: Africana Studies and the Decolonization of Imperial Cartographies in the Americas', in Lewis Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (eds) *Not Only the Master's Tools: Theoretical Explorations in African-American Studies*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press, pp. 51–84; Mignolo, Walter (2000b) *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Mignolo, Walter (2005) *The Idea of Latin America*. Malden, MA: Blackwell; Mignolo, Walter (2011) *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
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5. We build on the approach to decadence offered in Césaire, Aimé (2000) *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press; and Gordon, Lewis (2006) *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press, as well as on Maldonado-Torres's account of the modern/colonial and the decolonial attitude in philosophy (see his 'Decolonial Turn', op. cit. 2017).
6. Sandoval, Chela (2000) *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
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8. Please note that East Asian names appear in this section with their surnames first.
9. See Gordon, Lewis (2011) 'Shifting the Geography of Reason in an Age of Disciplinary Decadence', *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(2): 95–103.
10. Tlostanova, Madina V. and Mignolo, Walter (2012) *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

11. Sun, Ge (2000b) 'How Does Asia Mean? (Part II)', trans. Shiu-Lun Hui and Kinchi Lau, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 1(2): 319-41 at p. 337; Sun, Ge (2000a) 'How Does Asia Mean? (Part I)', trans. Shiu-Lun Hui and Kinchi Lau, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 1(1): 13-47.
12. Sun 2000b op. cit. p. 337.
13. Ch'a, Sŭng-gi (2009) 반근대적 상상력의 임계들: 식민지 조선 담론장에서의 전통, 세계, 주체 [Criticalities of the Anti-modern Imagination: Tradition, World, and Subject in Colonial Korean Discourse]. Seoul : Pu-rŭn-yŏk-sa, pp. 148, 151.
14. Jeong Eun Annabel We explores the two critiques of modernity from East Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and what transmodernity would entail for East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, in a paper she presented at the 9th Conference on East-West Intercultural Relations, 'Global South, Latin America, and the Luso-Hispanic World' 12-13 May 2017. In the paper, entitled 'Decoloniality and "Hyundae (현대)": A Dialogue in Latin American/Caribbean and East Asian Genealogies', she argues that Enrique Dussel's concept of transmodernity resonates with some aspects of overcoming modernity of the Japanese PanAsianist historical philosophy, but that these aspects were not actualized due to crucial failures of self-reflection in the latter; instead, she finds the potential reurfaced in their Korean interlocutors and post-Second World War lines of thought in East Asia that developed out of the Bandung conference.
15. Ch'a 2009 op. cit. pp. 279-80.
16. Kwŏn, Myŏng-a (2009) 식민지 이후를 사유하다: 탈식민화와 재식민화의 경계 [Thinking the Post-colonial: The Boundary between Decolonization and Recolonization]. Seoul: Ch'aek-se-sang, p. 31.
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24. We are deploying Indigenous people in Asia here to refer to those groups who self-identify as Indigenous (most often groups who have been uprooted, massacred, or confined in their territory, or with regard to their sovereignty status in relation to a dominant nation-state). The question of who is and is not Indigenous (and by whose standards) seems less conducive to the shift in thinking here than the foundational challenge posed by Indigeneity to the modern colonial world-system: various socio-political endeavours in Asia have been considered in many other terms apart from Indigenous sovereignty struggles, even though Indigeneity has most profoundly called out the groundless justifications for the modern colonial world-system behind the atrocities in Asia. See, Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (1999) 'The Ainu: Beyond the Politics of Cultural Coexistence', *Cultural Survival* 23(4), special issue on Visions of the Future: The Prospect for Reconciliation, available at: www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/ainu-beyond-politics-cultural-coexistence.
25. Mignolo 2005 op. cit.
26. See, for example, Salazar Bondy, Augusto (1996) *¿Existe una filosofía de nuestra América?* 13th edn. Mexico, DF: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.
27. Maldonado-Torres 2011a op. cit.
28. Dussel, Enrique (2013) *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*, trans. Eduardo Mendieta et al. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; Dussel, Enrique (1985) *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilina Martinez and Christine Morkovsky. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
29. Dussel, Enrique (1995) *The invention of the Americas: Eclipse of 'the Other' and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Barber. New York: Continuum.
30. Césaire 2000 op. cit.
31. Dussel, Enrique (1974) *Método para una filosofía de la liberación: Superación analéctica de la dialéctica hegeliana*. Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme.
32. Ibid. p. 182.
33. Dussel 1985 op. cit. p. 183.
34. Dussel, Enrique (1996) *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, trans and ed. Eduardo Mendieta. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, p. 6.
35. Dussel 1974 op. cit. pp. 184, 185, 190.
36. Dussel 1996 op. cit.
37. As already mentioned in the previous section of this essay, 'Shifting the Geography of Reason' is the motto of the Caribbean Philosophical Association, an institutional space within the currents of the global academy that is

taking concrete steps to transform the field of philosophy in particular and the structure of the university in general.

38. Dussel 1996 op. cit. p. 53.
39. Dussel, Enrique (2011) 'From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for a Dialogue', trans. George Ciccariello-Maher, *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(2): 16–43, at p. 17.
40. Ibid. p. 18.
41. Ibid. p. 16.
42. Mignolo, Walter (2007) 'Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality, and the Grammar of De-Coloniality', *Cultural Studies* 21(2–3): 449–514.
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47. Gordon 2006 op. cit. *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times*. Boulder, Co.: Paradigm Press; Gordon, Lewis (2000) 'Du Bois's Humanistic Philosophy of Human Sciences', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 568: 265–80.
48. See Martín Alcoff op. cit. 2015 and 2005. See also Sylvia Wynter (2003) 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation – An Argument', *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3(3): 257–337. See also, Gordon 2000 op. cit.
49. Wynter, Sylvia (1994) 'Afterword: Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/Silencing the "Demonic Ground" of Caliban's Woman', in Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido (eds) *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 355–72 at p. 364; Wynter, Sylvia (2003) 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation – An Argument', *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3.3: 257–337.
50. Wynter 1994 op. cit. pp. 357–58.
51. Since Kimberlé Crenshaw's development of the term 'intersectional', social and political philosophy have remained somewhat vague in their accounts of identity. There is common agreement among most contemporary theorists that identity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that cannot be broken down into distinct axes of oppression. In practice, however, this insight has proven difficult to develop. The salient point is that rather than rely upon a vague or problematic conception of intersectionality or identity, Wynter develops an account of intersectionality by linking together race and culture. This theoretical move both highlights the ambiguity that remains in

intersectional theories and produces a new horizon for such theories going forward.

52. Wynter 1994 *op. cit.* pp. 361–2.

53. *Ibid.* p. 363.