

# Decolonial Research Methods: Resisting Coloniality in Academic Knowledge Production (Webinar 1)

Tues, 10/26 • 41:05

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Anthropology, anthropologists, native, disciple, anthropological, ethnography, savage, colonial, slot, practices, students, disciplinary practices, methodological, groves, decolonizing, Watson, quote, knowledge, category, moments

## SPEAKERS

Vineeta Sinha

### Vineeta Sinha

Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. I'm delighted to be here this afternoon. And I want to thank Dr Leon Moosavi for inviting me to be a part of this very important conversation. And I also want to thank the sponsors and organisers for curating this wonderful webinar series. It's so heartening to see such tremendous interest and enthusiasm in this subject, and I look forward to a good discussion at the end of it. So I'm going to take probably the full time that's allocated to me, so I will speak for about 40 to 45 minutes. The title of my talk this afternoon is Annihilating the "Savage Slot" from Anthropology: Materializing Reflexive Practices.

So let me begin with an anecdote and frame the problematic. In 1955 Murray Groves, an Australian anthropologist, reported an encounter he had with a slight young man in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. In this exchange, the young man in question, Lepani Watson, speaking of the Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's research in the Trobriand Islands, declared to Groves, I quote, "You may be interested to know that Malinowski was in error", end of quote. Citing knowledge given by his membership in the community, Watson explained, "I am a Trobriand Islander myself, and from what I have heard of his writings, it is clear that Malinowski did not understand our systems of clans and chiefs". Watson then presented a surprised Groves with a typewritten page of foolscap, which he said is a short account he had written himself, and which outlines the facts as they really are, and I should like you to have it. Groves surmise that the redress Watson sought was to make the facts available to those who have been misinformed. In an obliging gesture, Groves had Watson's written account in English reproduced in the anthropology journal *Man* with the counsel that and I quote, "It should be compared with *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* pages 62 to 72", end have quote. This remarkable conversation, while published in *Man* in November 1956, has remained largely unknown to anthropologists. Groves himself did not theorise this encounter any further, nor did the journal readers interrogate Malinowski's his analysis on the basis of Watson's reputation. Such rare contestations even when and if acknowledged, are at best deemed isolated, and it was quickly forgotten. However, this

exchange carries tremendous import and merits a revisit in the context of the present discussion on decolonizing anthropology and constitutes a critical starting point in this talk. The legacy of the savage slot, its methodological importance and unequal politics persist in contemporary disciplinary practices in anthropology. This is largely because while anthropology's entanglements with its colonial past have been noted and critiqued since at least the 1950s, calls to expunge the legacy of hierarchies and hegemonies have not been acted upon sufficiently by its practitioners, or produced the requisite changes. The ensuing problematic ethnographic practices in the field in the classroom and in professional arenas of conferences and publishing have managed to thus survive, often sidestepping criticism of the disciplines embeddedness in imperial, neo-colonial and neo-liberal politics with rhetorical ornamental manoeuvres. Anthropology initially pretended not to acknowledge the colonial presence and notice that the native, carefully curated as its subject matter, was also colonised. Critics have rightly highlighted that unequal power structures have framed ethnographic practices and anthropological knowledge production. Much of this edifice firmly persists in contemporary ethnographic practices, as does the centrality of the savage slot, which seems to have found a permanent home in anthropology.

Let me move to the next section of the talk, which I call Anthropology and the Savage Slot. Since the middle of the 20th century, anthropologists have highlighted the colonial legacy of the discipline's troubled past. The collective call to decolonize anthropology has seen feminist postcolonial and third-world scholars raise their voices together with a cluster of anthropologists from the Global North. However, unpacking the relationship between colonialism and anthropology has spoken loudly to the unequal power underpinnings of the discipline only since the 1990s. In theory, there has long been a level of discomfort with anthropology's blindspots and practitioners seem to agree that the discipline had to be reinvented to remain relevant. Some even predicted the demise of anthropology unless it was radically transformed. Through these moments of intense scrutiny and soul searching, the discipline has failed to sufficiently reinvent itself. No habits, fundamental assumptions and disciplinary practices shifted effectively. From the mid 19th century, anthropology moulded and rendered colonised subjects into natives, primitives and others, marking the regions they inhabited as field sites such as a Africa, Asia, India, China, appropriating in the process people and sites as objects of anthropological inquiry. Early British anthropologist like Haddon, Rivers, Fraser, Tyler and Malinowski drew upon a body of extant information about non-Europe in crafting remix of the new discipline. The corpus of travel writing, missionary reports and colonial narratives was sprinkled with spectacular images of exotic primitives and noble savages. Anthropology certainly did not invent but rather inherited one variant of the savage slot, as has been argued by the late Michel-Rolph Trouillot, but in appropriating the slot and its associated radical alterity as the epistemological and conceptual foundations of their discipline, anthropologists have reconstituted and transformed this inheritance in critical ways. Writing in 1991, the late Michel-Rolph Trouillot noted and I quote, "Anthropologists' future depends largely on its ability to contest the savage slot and the thématiques that construct this slot. The times are ripe for this questioning", end of quote. For Trouillot, the future of anthropology demanded, I quote, "an explicit attack on the savage slot itself and the symbolic order upon which it is premised", end of quote. The savage slot clearly has had tremendous traction in anthropology and persists, demonstrating a capacity to morph and find new resting places, changes of what Trouillot has called the symbolic order and thématiques, which I interpret as the underlying logic of difference, otherness, exoticisation and stigmatisation of the savage slot linger in unexpected quarters in anthropology, but are often too subtle

to pin down concretely. Indeed, these problematic ideas have been fortified and given a new lease of life in forging camaraderie with other blind spots like racism, sexism and elitism, producing newer, more potent iterations. Even as the savage slot also manifestly expressed as native, other, indigenous, minority, marginalised remains firmly in place in the discipline, there have been growing challenges as the subjects of anthropology, talk, gaze and write back to anthropologists. But as noted earlier, this is not entirely a recent phenomenon. What is to be done with the savage slot and its very contemporary iterations? Taking inspirations from Trouillot's incisive work, I reiterate the call to confront the savage slot, and the mode in which its problematic assumptions have been wedged into the very epistemologies, methodologies and theoretical foundations of anthropology. I argue for expunging the savage slot from anthropology given its particularising, alienating, disempowering, dehumanising and stigmatising effects. As an ethnographer, I see the savage slot as an idiom that expresses well the epistemological and political limits of the discipline's practices. I invoke this category in order to critically engage regnant anthropological norms and practices and move towards alternatives, which for me are the tools for decolonising anthropology.

I move now to the next section of the talk, which I've called Materialising, Reflexive Practices. A scrutiny of attendant disciplinary practices in anthropology, discussing doing reading, writing, and teaching ethnography continue to be grounded in the savage, native and other slot, as do its epistemologies, methodologies and analytical frames. Arguably, decades of self-reflection have moved the needle well away from the discipline's original and methodological and ontological template. But how can those moments which disturbed and unsettled the everyday practices of the discipline be leveraged? In addition, how can spaces for dialogue and debates and the conditions for materialising new disciplinary practices be created? I argue that it is precisely the reform of these named practices which carry the potential for decolonising anthropology in a refusal to take for granted the logic and methodology for reproducing disciplinary knowledge and move towards the important task of reimagining these. The savage slot frame the subject matter of classical anthropology, the study of the native, the other with a view to capturing the native point of view, as well as its methodological turn to fieldwork has conceived of the fieldworker ethnographer, anthropologist and author as the objective omniscient knower. In the face of critique, the persistence of this trope has often been dismissed as a dated view of the discipline with examples cited to demonstrate that anthropologists have indeed done fieldwork at home, and more recently highlighted the emergence of autoethnography. However, it is striking that for the most part in parts of Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and South Asia in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc., anthropology as a disciplinary practice continues to reproduce Western models institutionally. Even as growing clusters of individuals, scholars and academics are pushing back boldly in turning to decolonise and innovate modes of doing, writing and teaching anthropology. Yet despite considerable theoretical scrutiny, the category native as well as its proxies, like informants, locals and villages, have survived in anthropological discourse, accorded legitimacy and even some respectability. Even as the words savage and primitive do not find favour with anthropologists today, the notions they embody linger in the cognate categories of natives, ethnic minorities and women. Scholars and students of anthropology from the former colonies, or the Global South, based in graduate schools in North American and European universities, for example, are still unreflectively and unapologetically referred to by their peers and professors as natives of particular cultural regions. They continue to receive the counsel that it would be best for them to study their own societies, given their familiarity with their own culture and

their competency in their own languages. This guidance speaks fundamentally to the epistemological foundations of anthropology in specifying who has the authority to speak and about what. In the early 1990s to the mid 1990s, I myself remember vividly being asked to speak by some of my professors as a native of Southeast Asia during my graduate student days in the United States. Hearing this in a fresh post-Writing Culture moment, some of my classmates were as outraged and disturbed as I was. Certainly I had found this imposed identity as a native, discomfiting and felt exoticized and denigrated simultaneously. Moving from the United States to Singapore, where I have returned to live and work since the mid 1990s, while I have not been referred to as a native I have suddenly been defined as a local academic, both by some of my own university colleagues, as well as students, and by visiting scholars, a descriptor that draws on the epistemology of the category native. In another example, despite my professional credentials as a scholar of diaspora Hinduism, I have often been recast by researchers from the Global North and the Global South as an informant given my ascribed Indian Hindu identity, which obscures my research expertise. Likewise, as a head of department, my authority and experience as a senior administrator are diminished when the office I occupy is mediated by an imposed identity of a brown woman, while my service competence and competencies and skills are devalued. The point I'm trying to make is that making natives is not a thing of the past. The image of the colonised native and the category native packed with old resonances thrive at the intersection of gender, regional location and minority group status. In a post colonial context, numerous new natives and others have also been created. For example, anthropology has fetishized the natives of the north east and tribal communities in India, while ethnic and religious minorities in Singapore are racially and culturally exoticised and have become the other of anthropological research. In both these instances, a dominant hegemonic gaze functions to achieve what I call an internal colonisation which needs to be recognised and contested. The category of native of course has been interrogated and unpacked by anthropologists like Lila Abu-Lughod, and Kirin Narayan just to name a few good examples. Ironically, despite these efforts, the term native has been given a new lease of life in being embraced by anthropologists from the former colonies, as they have long self-identified as native anthropologists in an attempt to reconfigure the category native in validating and celebratory terms. This category has been offered as a partial solution in facilitating genuine self-representation, but with the detachment and distance bestowed by disciplinary training. Conventional anthropological reasoning has translated natives and native anthropologists alike as providers of data, often what is called authentic, genuine data based on the experience of being members of native communities. This has also meant the exoticisation and valorization of native voices as untouched, pure and original. But sometimes this very apparent closeness to actualities and experiences has been seen as a problem, as native subjectivity is perceived to taint the accuracy of reportage and sense making. In this logic, while natives can provide authentic and close-to-actual accounts, the capacity to theorise and be objective has therefore been questioned. This is something I have encountered in the classroom in the scepticism expressed by students about the validity of native accounts, including the accounts of native anthropologists. The long standing geopolitics of academia and the division of intellectual labour between the Global South as suppliers of data and empirical evidence, and the Global North as theorists and analysts emanates from the epistemology of the native, non-native binary and persists in the present. A recent key learning moment was the decision to place an image of Margaret Mead holding a human skull on the cover of American Anthropologist in March 2020. This disturbed and outraged, refreshing historical memories for many and traumatising many others. Critics have cited this as an unreflexive act and evidence that it is business as usual for anthropology in the 21st century. The aftermath of the event has been

intriguing. Despite yet perhaps precisely because of the multiple controversies it has triggered, the moment has facilitated debates which seldom occur amongst practitioners, but are much needed so that the deep seated myriad ways in which colonial thinking and the presence of the savage slot has been normalised in the discipline and the profession can be acknowledged. This is in inspired both transparent exchanges and uncomfortable conversations that are tantamount to what I call a discursive opening up in the discipline which is much needed. Decolonising anthropology is not about denying or erasing the discipline's colonial past. Rather, an acknowledgement of this legacy is first needed in order to ultimately free the discipline, academia and profession from the shadows of hierarchies and inequalities.

Let me move to the next section of this essay, which I've called Rethinking the Production of Ethnography. I approach ethnography as a form of theoretical knowledge production that is grounded in a series of intersecting methodological and conceptual premises. Following the critique of conventional ethnographic forms and practices, alternative modes of doing reading and writing ethnography have been conceptualised, and indeed, sometimes also actualized. However, for the most part, the politics of anthropology, embodied in the unequal power relations between the observer and the observed, and its consequences has in the past mostly been debated by established senior professionals rather than by untenured academics. Yet even the most elegant and robustly theoretical of these criticisms appear to have had little influence on the conventions through which traditional ethnographic forms and logics have endured. Today, however, it must be noted that junior faculty and graduate students in Asia and elsewhere in the Global South have underscored the persistence of the seemingly unshakable politics and problematics of othering representing and writing in anthropology, reiterating the need to first acknowledge and then act to fix the problem. For the reasons that I have stated earlier, I argue that the category native signifies a particularising rather than a universalizing category, with non-native as its corollary and the to clearly have a hierarchical relationship. Every reference to the category native marks difference and is associated with the colonised, the indigenous, the marginalised, the peripheral and the powerless. Its utterance continues to objectify, marginalise and dehumanise the party in question. The continued invocation of natives and others as subjects of anthropology is a reminder of the power inequalities between natives and non-natives. For me, categories like native anthropologist and indigenous anthropologist are equally problematic. These descriptors translate into problematic notions about what natives who are anthropologists can and cannot accomplish who, what and which societies they can study and do research with, and whether they can be objective in reporting on their own societies. By not recognising these practitioners as also producers of theory and anthropological knowledge they are denied equal standing with their peers in the Global North. I argue that an uncomfortable silencing, containment and marginalisation of native expert voices materialises when the work they produce is framed as native ethnography or native anthropology. Scholarly contributions from the Global South have typically not had a theoretical universal appeal given that the non west-west divide, indeed insinuates and epistemic binary, and only superficially references a special geographical dichotomy. Without doubt, subjectivities and identities matter profoundly and ethnographic research and can enable and, or constrain ethnographers and interlocutors alike, as both seek to make sense of socio cultural, political worlds and experiences. However, an anthropologist identity and positionality are viewed as obstacles to producing meaningful knowledge, particularly when research of native anthropologists is evaluated. And ethnographers' subjectivity is indeed constituted of all fieldwork experiences and frames the production of ethnography, but this is not determined by some ascribed,

inherited attribute like race, ethnicity, gender, religion or indigeneity, but shaped rather by membership in experiences of and participation in community life. The term native has sometimes in practice been replaced by kindred substitutes, all of which I argue need to be displaced from anthropological discourse. Words carry meanings, but they also communicate histories of injustices and inequalities and embody painful reminders. While I admit that some words can be and have been evacuated of their inherited meanings and fashioned anew, I contend that this is not possible with the term native, given its entanglements with the inequalities, violence and dehumanisation associated with colonial experiences. The continuous usage of this term therefore, as applied to subjects and subject matter of anthropology, and to ethnographers from the former colonies completely undermines anthropological endeavours to make larger overarching human connections and transcending the binaries of self, other, subject, object, native, non-native.

I move to the next section, which I've entitled Teaching Ethnography Anew. And this is where I try to suggest some concrete practices through which some of the problematics that I have identified could be addressed. While there is one there is currently considerable support for undertaking the project of decolonizing anthropology, there are many competing interpretations of what this means and how this might be achieved. In fact, it has even been asked whether a discipline which is so deeply rooted in colonialism can be fully and meaningfully decolonized. There are compelling grounds for decolonizing anthropology which is by definition a critical, political and emancipatory project for me. The remit of this task is colossal and challenging, but also exciting. Exposing biases in the discipline's epistemology and analytical frames, but skims the surface of the iceberg. Additionally, this task of rethinking anthropology's methodological and theoretical foundations needs to reach the very institutional, academic and professional structures that sustain multiple hierarchies. Ironically, many anthropologists are not not inspired to problematize the discipline's history and indeed reproduce, taken-for-granted disciplinary norms and practices. While the Writing Culture project of the late 1980s highlighted the need for reflexivity in practising anthropology, the decolonizing project reiterates this even more forcefully. I agree with Paulo Freire that pedagogy can be a tool for revolution and empowerment in the hands of educators and students alike. It is in conceiving and instituting new pedagogical practices that key strikes can be made in the larger project of decolonizing anthropology, first in disrupting and unsettling methodological and theoretical assumptions and unthinking pedagogical practices and second, inviting and inspiring the current and future generations to collaboratively think through the remit of a decentered, enlightened anthropology. To start, the complex, layered and multifaceted encounters between anthropology and colonialism need to become what Schutz and Luckmann have termed the common sense stock of knowledge for students of anthropology, while avoiding a simplistic and reductionist narrative of anthropology's colonial past, instead, emphasising the multiplicity of colonial encounters with anthropology and historical specificity is critical in articulating this interface. Historically, ethnographers did successfully engage in their craft due to pre existing hegemonic relations between the coloniser and the colonised. The anthropological knowledge they produced had the potential to be exploited, utilised, for example, by colonial administrators to augment imperial interests. Often this was the case although the relationship between colonial administrators and anthropologists was not always one of complete collegiality and complementarity. There were many tensions and rough edges here too. Yet, as Bilal Assad notes in a damning observation, I quote, "There is a strange reluctance on the part of most professional anthropologists to consider seriously the power structure within which the discipline has taken shape", end of quote. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this

critique of the discipline that I have outlined, has been received somewhat begrudgingly by some and not deemed to be palatable by other anthropologists. Even more disturbing apathy and indifference to anthropology's colonial past are encountered in anthropological circles even today. Although defensive and cynical responses are seldom articulated openly these days and rarely appear in print, anthropology's colonial past as well as the need to decolonize anthropological knowledge production needs to be normalised. Neither of these should any longer be surprising to students of anthropology. Introductory anthropology textbooks do not typically exclude, sorry, do not typically include extensive discussions of the colonial context as a backdrop against which ethnographers conceived and practiced their craft. This needs to change.

Discussions about the history of the discipline need to move from professional arenas of journal and book publishing conference keynotes and distinguished lectures into the classrooms. Students should be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the disciplines origins and its past, rather than the uncomfortable bits be denied, hidden or ignored. Students should be invited to confront and process the colonial context of anthropological knowledge production, the implications of attendant explicit and implicit inequalities for assessing claims of objectivity and authenticity and the facticity of the knowledge produced merit scrutiny as well. The pedagogical narrative in the classroom should include questions about how anthropological knowledge was defined in the first place, who were seem to be the legitimate producers of such knowledge, what knowledge claims were made and what epistemologies were employed. But this discussion needs to transcend history in the critical notice that despite the official end of colonial rule, these problematics are not a thing of the past. The political economy of anthropological knowledge production and the infrastructure that sustained these continued to be marked by a hierarchical unequal relationships in the present. As such, they are continuities rather than a disjuncture across historical moments, rendering intact the disciplinary and institutional core against which much of anthropology is practised and reproduced in the present. Moving beyond such critique, however, I argue that it is imperative to then dramatically reorganise the teaching of anthropology and curate foundational curricular reform, without being prescriptive and respecting the autonomy of individuals to craft their own course materials. It is critical to challenge the anthropological canon which is often reproduced unthinkingly in syllabi and curricula in universities globally, a process that has been studied by people like Bambara and Hootfer and many others. Challenging a given body of canonical work does not mean excluding this from reading lists. Rather, this entails asking questions about how certain bodies of knowledge were identified, and marked as foundational and classical in the first place, thus highlighting the create the selective and constructed nature of the canon, something that has been so elegantly argued for by Raewyn Connell. Creating spaces for engaging receive disciplinary wisdom critically and historicizing and deconstructing the same, I feel and in my experience pays greater pedagogical dividend than simply ignoring it. Students should also be familiarised with the corpus of critical work produced by anthropologists that has long argued for the need to decolonize anthropology. Dissenting voices calling for decolonizing anthropological knowledge production in the past and today, however, suggest that much work remains to be done. Diverse and inclusive curricula would not only inform students but also inspire them to engage these critically would help them to materialise, the project of decolonising knowledge, production, and above all interrupt a mechanical and unreflexive reproduction of the anthropological canon. Another powerful strategy which I have used in the classroom would be to source, include and insert silenced, marginalised and obscured voices and personas as key players in the history of anthropological thought. In fact, my colleague Syed Farid al-

Attas and I have actually done this for classical social theories as well in the time that we thought theory at the National University of Singapore. This attention to voices and personas which have been neglected requires paying attention to particular kinds of blind spots, like Eurocentrism and Androcentrism that have functioned to recognise an anthropological canon and which lists the discipline's founding fathers typically as the great men of ideas from Europe and America. Other figures including women, non-western and non-white thinkers have been either unashamedly omitted, or encapsulated in terms like female anthropologists or native anthropologists, which I contend are essentially categories of containment as the particularise and stigmatise the work produced by these individuals. In teaching a graduate module called Producing Ethnography at the Department of Sociology, NUS, I have included a variety of individuals from diverse locations and timeframes such as Francis Hsu, Jomo Kenyatta, M. N. Srinivas and Zora Neale Hurston to broaden the canvas of anthropological thought and refuse to ghettoise them as native anthropologists. My strategy has instead been to bring these anthropologists into conversation with their peers elsewhere, in order to deconstruct and unpack the category native and surface it as an imposed problematic identity, which I present as being consequential in the process of uttering which. Interviews in the discipline today. The realisation that doing reading and writing ethnography are intimately entangled processes would lead to sophisticated classroom discussions. I can vouch for this from from experience. Students would be inspired to learn from real life examples of how other ethnographers struggled with issues and problems of objectification and otherness.

Let me now move, in the interest of time, to a conclusion which I have entitled in this talk An Incomplete Project. Faye Harrison underscored the value of, I quote, "dialogues debates and reconciliation amongst various non-western and western intellectuals" in 1991, and asked, "Can authentic anthropology emerge from the critical intellectual traditions and counter hegemonic struggles of third world peoples?". Without doubt, this remains a key question today. Several related queries then follow. In decolonizing anthropology who should be the agents of change? Speaking realistically and practically, who can make a powerful intervention in decentering the dominant disciplinary discourse? Lepani Watson, our colleague from from the Trobriand Islands who had a conversation with Murray Groves, Lepani Watson's early challenge to Malinowski has clearly not made a dent, even as it was reported publicly, perhaps as nothing more than an amusing novelty. If the anthropology colonialism interface is particularised, in being of interest only to former natives and their descendants, anthropologists or otherwise, the project of decolonizing anthropology will remain a marginal and marginalised endeavour. Assuming collective ownership, as practitioners the global community of anthropologists needs to be invested in acknowledging anthropologists colonial inheritance, and its continuing imprint on the discipline's epistemologies, conceptual frameworks and indeed its politics. It has long been noted that ethnography is essentially social, although mostly undertaken by individual ethnographers. The human dimension of fieldwork and the responsibility to social relationships are priorities in ethnographic research and writing. Acknowledging that fieldwork is a collaborative effort reflect these commitments. It is another matter that this is not always acknowledged, openly. A text from 2019 entitled Decolonizing Ethnography: Undocumented Immigrants and New Directions in Social Science is an excellent example of collaborative ethnography, which through co-authorship attempts to dissenter, the unequal hegemonic power dynamics between ethnographer and interlocutors. This text carries the name of four equal co-authors, Bejerano, Juarez, Mijangos and Goldstein, two of whom began their journey as research assistants and two others who were professional researchers,



illustrating well that an enlightened ethnography can be the tool for decolonization and demonstrating that ethnographic practices embody a political stance, not to mention an activism. While this talk carries individual authorship, the sentiments expressed here reflect several decades of impassioned, ongoing conversations I've had with like minded colleagues and students in corridors, canteens and classrooms, and sadly, far fewer of these animated discussions in professional arenas like conferences, and publications, although this has begun to change recently, and I think this is a very, very welcome, move forward. It is only ethical that I acknowledge the collective origins of the thinking and sensibilities that I expressed here this afternoon, even as the language is mine, and all inadequacies are mine alone.

Finally, I see the task of decolonizing anthropology as an unfinished project inevitably, yet I'm not disheartened by the incompleteness of this endeavour, because declaring any kind of closure in efforts of knowledge production is inherently limited, as is the notion that all questions have been posed and answered, and then all problematics have been resolved. Instead, I hold that striving to make bold overtures, create spaces and contemplate gambits would motivate current and future generations of anthropologists to push disciplinary boundaries and conceive creative alternatives. In this spirit, I believe that what has been registered as moments of crisis in the path anthropology has traversed, should be welcomed and seen as productive, rather than debilitating. For me, these have also precisely been moments of inspiration and innovation, vital and imperative for unmaking and remaking disciplinary practices in anthropology. And I just want to end by saying that this paper is dedicated to my former supervisor, the late Michel-Rolph Trouillot, from whom I learned that critique is and can be empowering and productive. Thank you so much for listening, I look forward to a good discussion.