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# Re/Searching (for) Hope: Archives and (Decolonizing) Archival Impressions

Romeo García, University of Utah

**Abstract** On archives and archival impressions, this essay extends archival research to the elsewhere and otherwise. The essay asks, how do we reposition the contents of archives so that we can position ourselves in relation to it otherwise? It puts forward a theory of (decolonizing) archival impressions.

**Keywords** (decolonizing) archival impressions, decolonizing centers, writing centers

I HAVE SHARED CONTENTS FROM MY ARCHIVE BEFORE. YOU, MY READER, MIGHT wonder then, why the *return* to the archive, *carefully reckoning* with its impressions, and the reinterpretation of *enduring tasks* again? Because that is the point of what Gesa Kirsch and I call *deep rhetoricity*, from which the aforementioned epistemic principles stem. *Deep rhetoricity* conceives of self as an archive of self(ves) and *stories-so-far* as an archive constituted by archival impressions—entries imposed on preexisting ones initiated by some [things], some [one], and/or some experience that bears on and enduringly acts upon our archives.<sup>1</sup> The corporeal exercises facilitated by its epistemic principles—a *return* home to the space and place where one’s, “I am,” tethered to where one’s, “where I do and think,” is constituted; a *careful reckoning* with archival impressions; an *enduring task* of repositioning the contents of our archive—invites a praxical theorizing, conceptual theorizing, theoretical conceptualizing, and a theory-building actioning.<sup>2</sup> To think in such terms is to reconceive Ann Stoler’s *epistemological experiments* and resituate agency within the cultural archives of the [You] and the [We].<sup>3</sup>

The task and utility of a rhetorical, technological, and decolonial-centered analytic forbids nothing less than an excavation of the deposits of trace marks engraved within the palimpsestic narratives of our *stories-so-far*. It demands inquiry into the cultural literacy, image-symbols-signs, sound, and sonic rhetoric of our archive. With [W] and [H] questions guiding the investigation on the ways we are always already attuned to the affective element and/or *pesado-ness* of some [things], the ideas, images, and ends of some [one], and/or some experiences,<sup>4</sup> a rhetorical and decolonial-centered analytic puts forth a prospective vision in the question it forms: how do we reposition the contents of archives so that we can position ourselves in relation to it *otherwise*? Rhetoricity, of course, already refers to doing—the affective element and/or *pesado-ness* of that doing, and the effects and consequences of that doing, whether on land, memory, knowledge, and/or relationality, long after some [thing], some [one], or some experience has passed. So, Gesa and I modified it with *deep* to draw attention to attunements and to emphasize an ethic of *thinking, feeling, and being-with* others (broadly conceived) *otherwise*. It is accompanied by an ethos of bearing witness in unsettling ways and a praxis of unsettling the settled. The question of [how] situates us squarely on *deep rhetoricity*.

Intervention and invention are necessary ingredients within the intellectual heritage of a decolonial option that I work from. Because whether the context is our modern/colonial and settlerizing archive, our own archive, the archive of writing and rhetorical studies (WRS), and/or the archive of the WC (WC), we cannot engage in a wor(l)ding *otherwise* if we do not understand how the past shapes the present and the present (re)imagines the past;<sup>5</sup> we cannot decolonize being without decolonizing knowledge. For the epistemological-grounded modern/colonial collective (MCC) thus, Anibal Quijano's appeal for epistemic extrication (delinking) is a call for a learning-unlearning-relearning path (epistemological decolonization). Such a path seeks to unsettle the ways cultural and thinking programs have imposed on our archive and aspires for re-existing within new epistemic and cultural communication (epistemic reconstitution)—a slow and deep (de-and-re)-compositioning of self toward being-and-becoming *otherwise*. The Zapatista-guided goal for such a path is what the MCC refer to as pluriversality:

En el mundo que queremos nosotros caben todos. . . . El mundo que queremos es uno donde quepan muchos mundos. La Patria que construimos es una donde quepan todos los pueblos y sus lenguas. (EZLN, 1997, p. 89)

To facilitate a learning-unlearning-relearning path toward pluriversality I turn to *deep rhetoricity*. It calls on us once more to view ourselves as archives. It appeals to

us to excavate the contents, create an archive out of archival impressions, reposition the content of our archive so we can position ourselves in relation to it *otherwise*, and deliberate *an-other* set of choices, options, and obligations and responsibilities. The meaning of researching and searching for hope in the archives is found in such *doings*. An archive approach has implications for the cultural archives of the [You] and the [We] as it underscores how we are always already in the process of being-and-becoming. What has been left to be seen is whether [We] will accept the invitation to engage in a slow and deep doing that labor toward the *possibilities of new stories*—*an-other* archive-to-come? Though I am unsure if it will be recognizable if it ever does arrive, one thing I am certain of is that the epistemic principle of being-and-becoming recognizable to self(ves), others, and communities *otherwise* will play an important role.

An archive approach facilitated by *deep rhetoricity* also has implications for a modern/colonial and settlerizing archive we are all in and part of. It is beyond the scope and breadth of this essay to trace the historical record of its designs and technologies. For me, the archival record though—by which I mean an ongoing structuring principle of settlerizing encounters, interactions, and engagements—begins in the Americas during the 1500s when settler colonialism established the first stage of modernity and its darker sides—Americanness, coloniality, and a modern/colonial world system. And when a written record was necessitated for documentary purposes and to explain, rationalize, and justify the operation of a colonial matrix—coloniality of knowledge, being, nature, power, or “the control of labor and subjectivity, the practices and policies of genocide and enslavement, the pillage of life and land, and the denials and destruction of knowledge, humanity, spirituality, and cosmo-existence” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 16)—within and beyond its immediate setting and context. It is an archive shared in, imported, expanded, disputed, and constellated by diverse epistemic systems, designs, technologies, and *palimpsestic narratives of imperialism*.<sup>6</sup> K. Wayne Yang notes “specific colonial apparatuses differ but similar technologies recirculate in them” (2017, p. 14). If settler colonialism and coloniality is an ongoing structuring principle, everything after the *idea of the Americas* is an archival impression that ensures the archive remains in the making.<sup>7</sup> At least that is what the MCC is asking us to accept with the spatial-temporal break from 18-century as a point-of-reference and shift to the 15th-and-16th-century. The meaning of researching and searching for hope in this archive is grounded in the question (“how do we reposition . . .”) that invites a doing that labors toward the *possibilities of new stories*—*an-other* archive.

The answer to the question of [why] I return to my archive situates me squarely on the *enduring task* to research and search for hope in the archival impressions of

my archive. An archive approach is a *praxical theorizing, conceptual theorizing, and theoretical conceptualizing* that has led me to a theory-building actioning I refer to as decolonizing archival impressions—entries imposed on preexisting ones meant to both unsettle the settled-ness of haunted/ing trace marks/palimpsestic narrative and bring about decolonizing agendas that can alter [Our] archives. This has implications for it means a decolonizing impression as small as one initiated in a face-to-face interaction in the writing center to one put in motion in our individual archives to one generated to unsettle a modern/colonial and settlerizing archive can have lasting effects. Now, the decolonial hope and decolonizing agenda of initiating decolonizing archival impressions is not about saving the university, WRS, and/or the WC. To echo Yang in *A Third University Is Possible*, it is about a strategic reassemblage both of our archives as decolonizing archival impressions and the entities for which we work as decolonizing ones. And that was the significance of the title of and the point I was making in *Unmaking Gringo-Centers*.

What an archive approach thus affords is the opportunity to constellate archives of hope-struggle and wor(1)d decolonizing archival impressions that labor toward *an-other* archive.<sup>8</sup> But what does any of this have to do with the WC? At the organizational level, Gringo-Centers like Gringodemia and *Gringoland* empty land and people of substance to clear a pathway for modern/colonial and settlerizing designs to take root—the technological power of the *idea (of the Americas)*. The *idea of the WC* does not exist in a vacuum, as much as the writing center community (WCC) would like to believe it's discrete from it all, nor is it a monolithic institution. Instead, it is an archival impression within a modern/colonial and settlerizing archive—Yang's *working parts* within the university that is a pillar, in assemblage with, and is itself an assemblage of modern/colonial and settlerizing designs.<sup>9</sup> *The idea of the university* is a prism by which to see this archive at work—the *rhetoric of place* that the WC performs underscores why the WC cannot be saved or decolonized. We are all in and part of that archive, which means our own archives are haunted by [it].

We are all entangled and complicit in modern/colonial and settlerizing designs. This has been understood by scholars from bell hooks to Lorgia García-Peña to Walter Mignolo to Gayatri Spivak to Sylvia Wynters. We are its affective channels of rhetorical transmission via *coloniality of instruction-and-curriculum*—a settler-centered instruction in which educators to writing center consultants like the “men of letters” of the past are both entangled in informing-giving form to coloniality of knowledge-being and complicit in managing and controlling bodies of knowledge and the bodies of human beings. It naturalizes the modus operandi of designs while peddling a racial matrix and racist worldviews predicated on the pretexts of epistemic and ontological differences, laws of who can be in-common, and subtexts of

coloniality of power. *Coloniality of instruction-and-curriculum* ultimately is a medium in which settler knowledge on appropriateness-correctness becomes factual and the tool by which to manage and control epistemic obedience. But not all complicities are equivalent, as Spivak would say (1994, p. 59). This underscores the opportunity for epistemic disobedience—to till the grounds on which power takes root. It is the most we can *long* for if indeed the WC cannot be saved. I thus submit for the WCC’s consideration an archive approach and a theory of (decolonizing) archival impressions.

An archive is a [human thing] human beings have built. It is the byproduct of physical contact, the accumulation of some [things] left behind by human touch. An archive evidences a touch within moments in time and indexes intentionality. If an archive was necessary for modern/ colonial documentary purposes then it can be coopted for *an-other* agenda. If touch reflects *epistemological experiments* by the same token they can reflect an experiment for a wor(1)ding of *an-other* archive.

## YOU

“You . . . You . . . You . . . You.” I was only hearing [You] in a particular session I had with my therapist several years back. Not being a psychoanalyst by training, I cannot psychoanalyze the meaning of [You]. But at one point, as has been the case in many of our sessions since my car accident and bout with COVID, I found myself pushing back against the views of my white, male, and heterosexual therapist. Sometimes, it is just me who cannot help but *question* while other times I admit it is me just wanting to *unsettle the settled*. “You need to accept” | “You need to turn the page” | “You need to work on [You]” | “You need not dwell in the realm of suffering.” “You . . . You . . . You . . . You.” (One day, after all the mentionings of the [You’s], Frantz Fanon’s [You] surfaces in a session. Constituted differently, geo-and-body, [We] are all in and part of a modern/ colonial and settlerizing archive—we its archival impressions). I will tell [You], my reader, what I told him: [You] need to know that the body remembers what the mind cannot suppress. (“O my body, make of me always [an actor-agent] who questions!” (232)). *Y eso duele*—to be on trembling grounds both within and at-home in the face of a Western epistemic system of ideas (Man), images (Human), and ends (Rights-to).

My mind was scrambled as I struggled with COVID and a concussion. My body was *out of joint*. In his essay “Memoria,” Victor Villanueva argues memories call (2004, p. 19). And oh, how they called. The memories I thought I had suppressed crept up in the year it took me to recover. They called—*throwing* me into the hauntings and haunting situations of my youth: times of homelessness, making do, and

consenting and assenting.<sup>10</sup> Daily, it seemed, I wrestled with what they demanded: *returns*, *careful reckonings*, and *enduring tasks*. So, I made *returns* to my archive and the accumulation of its haunted/ing literacies, images, and rhetorics that constitute it. *Returns* became part of my daily routine of relearning how to breathe, stretch, and regain control of my body and mind.

I made *returns* to my making it out literacies. “It is okay if you end up hating or resenting me. So long as you make it out, I did my job.” I made *returns* to the haunting images of me sitting at the table with Mom reading letters and eyeing photographs of a man who will never have earned the title of “dad.” I made *returns* to just like him rhetorics: “You’re going to end up just like him.” It is something I inherited and embodied—that affective element and/or *pesado*-ness of some [thing] we feel deep within the bones. I *carefully reckoned* with what it all demanded, to relearn how to dwell in my body and mind, my brown(ed)ness—an inheritance and embodiment of being subjected to “checkings,” felt the most in Gringodemia. *Y eso dolió*. I needed to though in order to listen for, well and deeply, to the memories that have long *pushed* me forward too—the (decolonizing) archival impressions initiated by others who had the audacity to have hope it is possible to enter *enough* to cover over the hauntingness and to give way to the *possibilities of new stories, an-other* archive.

An archival impression.

*On a recent visit to Japan (November 2023), we saw The Boy and the Heron. I have found that many of Ghibli's films ask, how do we go on in the face of hauntings, of what haunts and lives deep within our bones, and amid all the loss, pain, hardship, and damage? Such a question resonated. Because a severe car accident puts into perspective how close to death one really is. Because loss can come in different forms—the dark periods that came with the sleepless nights for days on end and for months. I was not just losing physical but also mental “weight.” Such films also ask, how do we find our way back to being-and-becoming recognizable? Though not a Japanese speaker, the film was an emotional experience—protagonists who undergo painful experience of only being able to go on and find their way back through physical, spiritual, and other-world-building connections. To unsettle the settled—such as the veil that cloaks the other-worldly—we must be present and be a witness to where [We] have been and with [who] and/or [what]. The grannies—guardians and shadow-figures—reminded me of Grandma and her comadres: a presence then, an absent presence now, an air of energy always. It would be a slow and deep (re)compositioning of being-and-becoming recognizable for the protagonist . . . for me. For [You]? The silver lining, if one could call such an occasion that, was the opportunity to heal Self and strengthen relations—to mend our archives.*

Returns can be painful. Because they can be unsettling. But that which *calls* and *returns* can all *push* us forward and recenter and resituate in our lives those who represent a lineage and air of energy manifesting as song, poetry, language, and love.<sup>11</sup> The nonliving permeate the everyday.<sup>12</sup> They can have a powerful presence in the lives of the living if we betray the metaphysical concept of Being at the thresholds of the real and unreal; suspend totalizing horizons of what is knowledge; open the door of *rhetoricity* to the living, nonliving, and nonhuman; and stage a politics of hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings.<sup>13</sup> But to do that work I had to relearn the praxis of creating presence where there is absence and sound where there is silence through *community listening*—a set of enunciations and material exchanges (*shadow work*).<sup>14</sup> Each return revealed the palimpsests of decolonizing archival impressions.

#### *Returns and Careful Reckonings*

An embodied experience. “[H]ere I am at-home” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, pp. 123, 16). Home as place. Home is the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), a border(ed) land. The suffix (“ed”) is less about rhetorical effect and more about making visible how the racialized, minoritized, and marginalized inherit and dwell in *rhetorics of place*: the internalizing of borders and boundaries encoded with the haunted/ing literacies, images, and rhetorics of recursive containment, monitorization, surveillance, and checking(s).<sup>15</sup> It will always have mattered for them *que uno es de ahí y no de allá*. Home as space. Home took on a different meaning when I was in middle school and high school. I did not feel at home in my own home. I called home wherever I could lay my head. My foundation of Self was on unsettled grounds; the prism of the mind reduced to the bricolage of hope-struggle and the body perpetually preoccupied with survivance, both of which faced the impending reality there is no going back to a home that once was. The body and mind remember home, the space and place where my, “I am,” tethered to, “where I do and think,” is constituted. *Y eso dolió*.

An existential crisis. “I had the feeling that I was repeating a [hellish] cycle. My originality had been torn out of me. I wept a long time, and then I began to live again . . . (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 129) . . . with tears in my eyes I put its [the body] machinery together again . . . My cry grew more violent” (p. 138). Grandma’s *shadow work* began after I left home for the first time. *Shadow work* too is less about rhetorical effect and more about making visible ways a *homeplace* can be created for others within a culture where the idiosyncrasies of *no te mete* trumps the welfare of others—the work carried out for an-other without certainty or guarantee for what it might yield.<sup>16</sup> “Vamos/Vámonos.” That day we went on a walk: 11th St.



to Austin Ave. to Pittman St. Grandma broke the silence, “En estos momentos mi’jo no lloramos.” We continued to walk and talk that day till we ended up at a comadre’s house. “Pásale . . . Siéntate.” I sat on the couch in silence. They were having a conversation for me. “¿Qué podemos hacer?” | “Oran por él” | “Nostros estamos aqui pa el.” Grandma and I left after about 30 minutes. She broke the silence, “No puedo decirte que todo va a estar bien.” She was always brutally honest with me in that way. “Pero, hoy no lloramos.” The body and mind remember where and from whom it sourced courage, when self is unsettled, when the cry is cyclical. Y eso dolió.

A cry of struggle. “I hope by analyzing it [a massive psychoexistential complex] to destroy it” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 14). [It]—the totality of that affective element and/or pesado-ness of some [things] that haunted. [It] forced a *scholarly* enunciation from a *scholar* who will never have arrived as more than the trace mark of a *citizenship from below*, “¡No dejaremos que cualquier cosa o persona nos trate como quiera. Porque si lo dejas, ya valió!” Grandma understood [it]—the totality of hauntings that stems from the living, nonliving, and nonhuman. [It]—the reason why “The Mexican” materialized as a palimpsest of identity within the racist dualistic and evolutionary murk of a *semiotic apparatus of enunciation* that invents, enunciates, and relegates the *other* to the shadows and below:<sup>17</sup> Fanon’s “zone of nonbeing” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 10) or Michael Taussig’s “deaths-space[s] in the land of the living (p. 133), where Gloria Anzaldúa’s “half dead” (p. 25) and Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s people at the “company of death” (p. 257) reside. Grandma understood no one can ever belong to such spaces-places. And that in the demand to *do otherwise*, despite hauntings and in spite of gaining meaning from hauntings and haunting situations, *assent* was necessary. My brown(ed)ness haunted, unsettled, and angered me. For Grandma, there was a difference though between *assenting* to conditions not of one’s making and consenting to being a co-signer to one’s own domination.<sup>18</sup> Therein lay her *rhetorical excellence-prowess* and the pesado-ness of “no te dejes.”<sup>19</sup> It was the grounds for going on *otherwise*,<sup>20</sup> the groundwork for identifying the rhetorical-ness involved in inheriting, embodying, and experiencing one’s historical body *otherwise*; in walking and seeing the world *otherwise*; in interacting and exchanging meaning with others (broadly conceived) *otherwise*. The body and mind remember a cry of a loved one who hopes in the struggle to carry out *work*—“¿Qué ves?” | “¿Qué oyes?” | “¡Entiendes!” | “¿entiendes?”—without certainty or guarantee for what it might yield.<sup>21</sup> Y eso dolió.

Disalienation. “[A] neurotic orientation” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 60) . . . “I was haunted” (p. 129). A hatred grew in me to/wards myself and others. “Hate is not

inborn; it has to be constantly cultivated, to be brought into being” (p. 53). “An anxious man who cannot escape his body . . . his race” (pp. 65, 67).<sup>22</sup> “Devaluation of self? Indeed yes” (p. 75). Grandma understood well the immense catalog of hauntings and haunting situations that like fog blanketed the LRGV. On our walks-talks, it was important for her to let me know, “¡así son las cosas!” Such an enunciation situated us on the haunting situation and on the complexes inherent in it that lead to the deterioration of Self (p. 79). “Te digo esto pa que sepas y aprendas.” I needed to *know* but also to *learn*. “Are there no other possibilities” (p. 62)? For Grandma, a *praxical theorizing*, a *conceptual theorizing*, a *theoretical conceptualizing*, a *theory-building actioning* began with a question,<sup>23</sup> “Pues, ¿ahora qué?” (Though one can never belong to the shadows or below going on *otherwise* is a rhetorically oriented project). It was a question grounded on a hope that a learning-unlearning-relearning path was possible, that we could indeed struggle to cultivate it into being through walking-talking.<sup>24</sup> Here, *pues* is not a filler word. It is an expression of uncertainty by a rhetor who dared to have the audacity to learn how to live *otherwise*—an inquiry without warranty; a rhetoric without certainty; a hope and an awaiting (“ojalá”) without guaranteed predicate. The point of the question, unbeknownst to me then, was to *know* what hauntings and haunting situation had made of us as the grounds for *learning* how to restore self to its proper place (pp. 13–14, 88). The body and mind remember that everything is and can be (re)learned.<sup>25</sup> Estaba en el proceso de algo nuevo.

A cry of hope. “I am fixed” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 116). Grandma was not a philosopher nor rhetorician by training but on our walks, I was her student, and she la maestra de lo que no puedes aprender en la escuela: “La vida todo te enseña pero en las cosas de dignidad es otra cosa.” I had to reckon with that, reconciling experiences of one fracaso after another with her “te lo dije.” I was laid bare with no home to go to and the inability to change how I felt trapped within my home. “I propose nothing short of the liberation of the man of color [black, brown, white, etc.]” (p. 10) . . . “How do we extricate ourselves” (p. 12) . . . “free [self] of the arsenal of complexes” (p. 30). “Sácate/quítate eso [giving up] de tu cabeza,” Grandma would tell me whenever I was on the verge of giving up. But I felt that I was not just in the world, the world was already too much in me.<sup>26</sup> “Sé terco en otra manera.” But the accumulation of that which made up my brown(ed)ness—a single-parent mother, low-income household, trouble-maker—was a constant reminder I was fixed. “Cuando piensas así y lo creas ya valió,” I believed [I] was not worth a damn. “To understand something new requires that we make ourselves ready for it, that we prepare ourselves for it” (p. 95). Grandma walked-talked with urgency thus. “Para la tres días me queda.” With-her, I learned how to see and listen rather than

just look and hear; I no longer saw absence nor heard silence. With-her, I learned an ethic, ethos, and corporeal praxis of thinking, feeling, and being-with others (living, nonliving, nonhuman) *otherwise*; a corporeal exercise of address that helped me to mitigate a precarious subject position of becoming a subject in rather than being solely a subject of my hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings.<sup>27</sup> “I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self” (p. 109) . . . “I am endlessly creating myself” (p. 229). “*Sigue adelante y con ganas porque siempre hay una y otra manera.*” The body and mind remember that self is the space-place of *returns, careful reckonings, and becomings*. “[T]o shatter the hellish cycle, he explodes” (p. 140). Y comencé a sentirme mejor.

Much more than that. “[T]he real leap consists in introducing invention into existence” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 229). I am what time and history, circumstances and hauntings, and inheritances and dwellings have made of me. But much more too. Our walks-talks gave me more than just an awareness of the *wounded/ing spaces-places* and *haunted/ing stories-so-far* that surround me and how we dwell in them.<sup>28</sup> “No sabemos cuándo ni dónde llegaremos en la vida.” Grandma saw an arrival, somewhere and someday, the *possibilities of new stories—an-other* archive.<sup>29</sup> So, we walked-talked. “A slow composition of my self in the middle of a spatial and temporal world . . . a real dialectic between my body [, others,] and the world” (p. 111).<sup>30</sup> “Llegarás a ser . . .” [Knowing I am a professor today, she would have said, “te lo dije”], but *llegarás* was never about a profession but about a process. Walking-talking changed the contents and terms of how I was to walk and see the world and interact and exchange meaning with others; a process of becoming (*llegarás a ser*). “¡Entiendes! Sácate/quítate eso de tu cabeza.” I was much more than that—what I was contained by. Ojalá.<sup>31</sup> “But I had to change my tune” (pp. 119, 129). The focus of our walks-talks was on the [You]. “I do not have the right to allow myself to be mired in what the past has determined” (pp. 230–231). I had to walk with intention. I needed to “move slowly in the world” (p. 116). Grandma reintroduced intervention and invention into existence so I could remember we exist at the nexus of being-and-becoming. And since then, something has remained enduring and ongoing. The body and mind remembers who initiated (decolonizing) archival impressions into our archive. Y comencé a sentirme más completo.

Pa que se quite. “I believe it is necessary to become a child again” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 190) . . . “to try to apprehend reality with the soul of a child” (p. 193). I am once again a child hearing the words, “pa que se quite.” To remove or take away.

“Ya ves, pa que se quite.” But the phraseology is deceptive insofar that it betrays its own meaning—like a photograph that *cannot say what it lets us see*,<sup>32</sup> an inheritance that *says read me will you ever be able to do so*,<sup>33</sup> a haunting that says will you ever have made it out and arrived? “¿Entiendes?” The experience never leaves us even if the lesson is learned. Was that ever the point? “[F]reedom requires an effort at dis-alienation” (p. 231). I cannot abandon, ignore, or exist outside my archive or the archive. Physically leaving a space-place like the LRGV does not remove a haunted/ing consciousness nor guarantee hauntings and haunting situation will cease presencing. Do we ever really make it out? Will we ever have arrived? We all must begin this life “by crawling” (p. 116). Oh, to be a child again. “The possibility of the impossible” (p. 218). A future, somewhere and someday, without hauntings and haunting situations. A possibility that has yet to be worked out? Pa que se quite, a knowing and unknowing. “I *needed* not to know” (p. 135). So, I walked. But “One must move softly” (pp. 188–189). So, I walked like a child with neither a time of arrival nor a destination point given or a given, in the form of an *awaiting*: a hope for that which may or may not arrive. “I am one who [a]/waits” (p. 120).<sup>34</sup> The body and mind remember the enduring and ongoing stages between a *setting-to-work* and an *ungraspable call*.<sup>35</sup> Y comencé a sentir una fuerza.

### *Enduring Tasks*

A walk home, a place and a feeling. “I had to choose. What do I mean? I had no choice” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 126). *Shadow work*: “No siempre tenemos una opción.” Something remained at *work* even as she was walking herself home, at the edge of life and death; unfinished business.<sup>36</sup> Grandma was an image of presence and absence and sameness and a differentiating sign of *otherness*, a fleeting of life blending into the shadows of the neighborhood she would walk to get to me. “¿Te asusté?” I was more concerned for her health than anything else. Grandma was ready, more ready that day than any other day I had heard her say, “Estoy lista.” Grandma was ready to die. Again, she was always so brutally honest with me, which stemmed from not having the luxury to treat me as a kid. “Vamos/Vámonos.” We went on one last walk-talk that day. It would be our last. “Nos vemos al rato.” In my community the nonliving can have a powerful presence in the lives of the living. Because we have learned how to think, feel, and be-with others (living, nonliving, nonhuman) *otherwise*. There is still unfinished business. My *enduring* and ongoing *task* remains committed in part to ensuring she and her work (enunciations and material exchanges) live-on [sur-vie]. The body and mind remember that it had a choice. What do I mean? It is hardly a choice at all but a demand. Y comencé a sentirme más completo.

*Being and Becoming Recognizable*

Bien presumido. “He is the one who knows. He betrays himself in his speech” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 23). I found myself in Gringodemia determined to write, speak, and be more ~~right~~ white. “[T]here is only one way out, and it leads into the white world” (p. 51). I ~~wanted to~~ needed to make it out. A “stranger memory.”<sup>37</sup> The *checking* of my body at the Sarita, Texas internal checkpoint would typify my experience in Gringoland.<sup>38</sup> “We are not that tree-hugging school”; “We don’t want diversity . . . Go back home wetback . . . Fucking Mexican” (students). Not quite Mexican for the Mexicans, political for Chicanos, light-skin enough to pass as White. “Unable to be assimilated, unable to pass . . .” (p. 65). I was a conditionally admitted student trying to prove my existence at all costs, because the only other option was to return home. “Are there no other possibilities” (p. 62)? Grandma and I would talk over the phone for our weekly check-ins. After listening to me ramble about my doubts, she would say, “¡No empieces . . . !” Another possibility is possible. “To act in the direction of a change” (p. 100). To act, direction, and change all imply a restructuring. “Ve a caminar,” Grandma would say. “A tu lado siempre.” I had to leave the LRGV. But neither it nor the language, culture, or mentality has left me. A slow and deep (de)-composition it has been since then. I had to leave and (re)learn how to return home *otherwise*. I had to leave to learn how to return *otherwise*. A slow and deep (re)-composition it has been in being-and-becoming recognizable to self(ves), others, and communities *otherwise*. The body and mind remember all instances the [You] is unrecognizable. Y encontré fuerza en saber que siempre estaré en proceso.

That which calls and forces a *return* can be painful. It can hurt. But for the racialized and minoritized, who know there are but two choices—consent to being relegated to the shadows and below or hope-struggle toward the *otherwise* through *assent*—it is important to research and search for hope in that which *pushes* us forward—enunciations (“¿qué ves?” | “¿qué oyes?” | “¿entiendes!” | “¿entiendes?” | “pa que sepas” | “pa que aprendas”) and material exchanges (walking, talking, shadow work). Herein lies the significance of *shadow work*, the initiating of decolonizing archival impressions in the name of love, care, healing, and learning. I refer to it as such because it happens behind the scenes of a modern/colonial and settlerizing archive and the *stories-so-far* of our archive with the intent of repositioning the contents for another so that they can position themselves in relation to it *otherwise*. Everything must be relearned including unlearning the idea hauntings and haunting situations are inherent to the haunted.<sup>39</sup> A slow and deep (de/re)-composition it would be.

A relapse. One day, I found myself at a Wal-Mart suddenly lost. I was forced by my body and mind to sit in the middle of an aisle. And as I sat there scared and confused,

I found myself clinging to an absent presence and talking to that which permeated the silence. “*Todo con tiempo*.” I needed to listen to my mind-body and stop moving too fast. “The body is not something opposed to what [You] call the mind” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 127). The body and mind knows healing has to be a slow and deep process.

Archival impressions:

*[We/arth] needs to heal.* “This is home,” my tío tells a colleague who accompanied me on a visit to el Valle in 2023. He shows him the backyard garden of papaya, limes, lemons, dragon fruit, avocado, pineapple, chile de monte, grapefruit, figs, guava, prickly pear, and much more. My tío had reappropriated what settlers in the 19th century had tried to call their own, “the Magic Valley,” a technological archival impression that manifests *the idea of Gringoland* (or Gringodemia) into reality—place myths, a by-product of visibility (Mirzoeff, 2011), assemblage and branding work (Wingard, 2013), and ghosting (Arvin et al., 2013; Bergland, 2000; Liew, 2024; Trouillot, 1995), that empties land and people of substance to clear a pathway for new claims of native-ness. But his words betrayed its own meaning. “I am at peace. I would not have it any other way.” To be at home otherwise. “[H]ere I am at home” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 123). My tío was in a different space than that of his youth; a different place that was not the barrio; a different time which Grandma had only ever hoped for and struggled toward when she would say, “te lo dije.” When he said, “This is my home,” he was referencing how he was able to find tranquility in the wreckage of what surrounds. And *[We/arth]*, slowly began to heal *otherwise*.

*Between [We/arth] and me.* “Between the world and me a relation of coexistence was established” (p. 128). Gardening had long connected us to others. “*Vamos afuera*.” We would walk out to her space, the place she went to think, feel, and be-with others. “*Siéntate*.” I would plant my butt on the ground. “*Ayúdame con esto*.” I would help remove the weeds, plant, and/or harvest. “*Con cuidado, cuidado*.” The garden re-linked her with home: to her community in México; to the colonias where my family was raised; to the fields where my tíos and Grandma worked; to the absent presences and voices of the wind that pushed her forward in time of struggle.<sup>40</sup> I had much to learn. “*Todo con tiempo*.” And *[We/arth]*, slowly began to heal *otherwise* as Grandma passed on an ethic, ethos, and praxis of thinking, feeling, and being-with for me to pick up, hold on to, learn from, and eventually pass along.<sup>41</sup> At that time, I would find tranquility in the wreckage of what surrounded me.

A full circle. “[H]umans have the least experience with how to live” (Kimmerer, p. 9). I turned to an other in learning how to live. Because “To live, by definition,

is not something one learns. Not from oneself. . .” (SoM xvii). And Grandma returned to the earth for guidance. She knew, “The land loves us . . . She loves us . . . a sacred bond” (Kimmerer, pp. 122, 125). It was a connection I had to learn. “Con caricia y amor.” Earth needed care and love too. It had a story to tell, of intimate interactions and exchanges; of hauntings and wreckage; of wounded/ing spaces—places and exploitation; of hope and healing. So, I would sit there with Grandma and listen, deeply and well—[You] is always already an accumulation of the [We] and how [We] care for one another inevitably reflects on the state of the [Earth]. [We/arth], an ethical (and not just an epistemological) reverence to the coexistence of the living, nonliving, and nonhuman—relational assemblages (instead of separate entities) key to the principle of pluriversality<sup>42</sup> and *an-other* archive.<sup>43</sup> Both are in need of healing. And [We/arth] slowly began to heal *otherwise*.

Toward a sacred bond. Whenever I was sick as a child, Grandma would go to the backyard, pick some herbs, and stir up some *medicina* for me to take. Yes, I was in a different space than that of my youth; a different place that was not the LRGV; a different time that was Grandma’s “te lo dije.” And yet, I was struggling to find tranquility and heal. I was in need of some medicine; a slow and deep (de/re)-composition to/ward healing. So, I went to the backyard too to plant me some herbs, mushrooms, potatoes, corn, chiles. And I would sit there and listen and bear witness to how seeds sprout out of the shadows of darkness and below. It reminded me that even in the wake of wreckage mushrooms still bloom. “Plants answer questions by the way they live, by their responses to change; you just need to learn how to ask” (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 158). So, I began a dialogue. “You need to know what they need, and once you do, they will give you what you need,” my *tío* told my colleague. Healing—a mutual endeavor. It was the closest I had ever been since my youth to thinking, feeling, and being-with Grandma and the earth. Both became the *seed[s] of love in the darkness* for me.<sup>44</sup> [17] years later, I had to relearn how to embrace, dwell, and be at-home *otherwise*. And [We/arth] slowly began to heal *otherwise*.

Assemblages of communality. On a recent visit to Japan (March 2023), we visited TeamLab Planets, an art installation. The theme was, “Together with Others, Immerse your Entire Body, Perceive with your Body, and Become One with the World.” Activities strived to unsettle the settled-ness of self and doing and thinking, feeling, and being-with others. As we entered the installation, “Floating in the Falling Universe of Flowers,” I was reminded of my journey with [We/arth]. We would come to lay our selves down among other bodies and experience the doors of the universe—an archive of the seasonal bloom, change, and de-composition of



earth. The space was the substance of humanity and air the song of [We/arth-ly] particles thinking, feeling, and being-with others—archival impressions constellating our archive. We were distributed of the same root—Matter. An archival impression *otherwise* within archives in the making (see below). I wondered, how do we do become ready to listen, be(ar) a witness-to, and make room for a Matter-ing *otherwise*—to think, feel, and be-with each other in the fabric of Matter?<sup>45</sup> And [We/arth] slowly began to heal *otherwise*.

In my persistent existential crisis that would endure day in and day out for over a year I had to (re)learn how to find tranquility in the wreckage of what surrounded me, in that which *called* and *pushed* me forward. That the body-mind remembers is not a strange proposition. Because the body is an archive of self(ves), *stories-so-far*, and the cultural memories of cultural rhetorics that unfold as song, poetry, and language. It was a slow and deep process, of re-making myself accountable through an obligation of and responsibility toward getting caught up *otherwise*: of writing of familiar spaces, places, and people to bring them out of the shadows and below (p. 195);<sup>46</sup> of preparing a ghostly return beyond the *borders* of wounded/ing spaces-places and haunted/ing *stories-so-far*; of being *epistemically disobedient* by materializing a cultural rhetoric and politics of hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings as an archive of cultural memory; of most importantly healing *otherwise*. And that is what an archive approach affords—the opportunity to excavate contents, create an archive out of archival impressions, reposition the content of our archive so we can position ourselves in relation to it *otherwise*, and deliberate *an-other* set of choices, options, and obligations and responsibilities.

Praxis-theory, or the mind-body, are inseparable. They are interrelated. Praxis must be theoretical, and theory must be rooted in the everyday.<sup>47</sup> Judy Rohrer tells us, “We are the set of stories we tell ourselves, the stories that tell us . . . I am these stories” (2016, p. 189). Stories are cultural texts and an archive is a collection of information about places, subjects, and/or events. By definition alone, my body is an archive. Anne Cvetkovich’s archival research on cultural texts lends itself here, describing them as “repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the context of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception” (2003, p. 7). My body is an archive of feeling-thinking constituted by the archival impressions initiated by some [things], some [one], and/or some experiences. Though certain trace marks of an *absent present* contaminating my *stories-so-far* will always be the condition of possibility for my thinking-doing,<sup>48</sup> stories are subject to change. We exist at the nexus of being-and-becoming. That is why Rohrer states, “We are . . . the possibilities of new stories” (2016, 189), why Kevin Browne claims we are “archives in the making” (2021, p. 51), and why Escobar



asks, “How can we best construct the archive of this new [pluriversality] formation?” (2020, p. 63). The meaning of research and searching for hope, grounded in an approach (an archive approach), a question (“how do we reposition . . .”), and theory-building actioning (decolonizing archival impressions), is a praxical theorizing that says we need to intervene in what haunts our archives and reintroduce invention into existence.

An archive in the making *otherwise* will undoubtedly demand human work-projects. What [We] need to *carefully reckon* with is how the archiving of our words, doings, and imaginings today are always already, according to Browne, a futuristic practice. Though we cannot ever “belong” to that space, place, and time we can exist there rhetorically insofar that the human work-projects we carry out today will always already be a prism by which to see how [We] were future-oriented either toward the status quo or the *otherwise*.<sup>49</sup> This establishes the exigence for decolonizing archival impressions, a hope that it may be possible to strategically reassemblage both our archives as decolonizing archival impressions and the entities for which we work as decolonizing ones to give way to the *possibilities of new stories*—*an-other* archive. To echo Lorde then in a slightly amended way, what will we have wanted from each other after our stories have been archived and told? Such a question situates us squarely not on a name or a proper heading but rather on what must live-on [sur-vie] and flourish *otherwise* beyond decolonial. We must ask the following question to situate an *elsewhere* and *otherwise-to-come* if only to underscore how human work-projects have to be community-oriented (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010, p. xxviii):

- Will that archive voice how [We] hoped-struggled toward becoming ready to listen, be(ar)ing a witness-to, and making room.
- Will that archive speak to where [We] choose to stand in wholly thinking, feeling, and being-with an-other?<sup>50</sup>
- Will that archive tell a story of a people who hoped-struggled to learn how to live in-common, welcome, and love an-other, *where they may have been* and in the *non-name of all*?<sup>51</sup>

A desire? No! How about a “longing” both for a present “enriched” by “the past and the future” (Tuck, 2009, p. 417) and for a future of “people-possessed” rather than “individually self-possessed” (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 25)? A world of the [You]? Perhaps! But how about a wor(1)ding of a future of the [We/arth]—“And long live the couple, Man and Earth!” (BSWM 127)—that extends relationality, or a thinking, feeling, and being-with, to the living, nonliving, and nonhuman? Wor(1)ding is a fusion of Toni Morrison’s “word-work” as taking place and Sara Ahmed’s words-language as making place—human work-projects that have a capacity for world-making.<sup>52</sup> But a

[We/arth]-to-come is a future-oriented rhetoricity. Because the “here” and “now,” as Browne would say, is unsatisfactory. I am inclined to believe then that we must “insist ourselves into a future we can otherwise only imagine” (2021, p. 38)—propelled by the past and the present, an ungraspable future [We] know “we will not see” and that “exists in a space we cannot truly inhabit” (pp. 51, 53–54). None of this is out of line with decolonial work that is a fusion between doings and imaginings that are future oriented. Such a proposition lends itself to writing and rhetoric insofar as that writing is that delicate balance between “carving bone” (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 73) and *reintroducing invention into existence* (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 231), while rhetoric is a vehicle of doings that can aspire and labor toward wor(l)ding *otherwise*. Our chance encounters, thus, whether in the classroom or the WC, are an opportunity to advance the cause of co-creating archives in the making *otherwise* rather than solely advancing the center.<sup>53</sup> What will a future, both as an idea and as an archive-to-come, tell us about the choices we chose to make in the present?

This essay is about what has come before [You]. The *idea of the WC* is inseparable from the theologically and secularly structured *idea of America*. Translation, the projects of territorial and epistemological (ex/ap)propriation—a space-place to be discovered, conquered, colonized, transformed into “resources,” managed, and controlled in perpetuity. Walter Mignolo (2005) wrote, “The ‘idea’ of America’ is not only a reference to a place,” but that which “makes it possible to transform an invented idea into ‘reality’” (*The Idea*, p. 151). A semiotic apparatus of enunciation in part transformed the *idea of America* into a reality: the racially oriented modern/colonial imaginary of a particular ethnic whose philosophy of language, tyrannic culture of alphabetic writing, and cultural literacy marshaled a relationality predicated on supposed epistemic and ontological differences (less knowing : less being). The *idea* is a prism by which to see the blueprint for global coloniality across spaces, places, and times. To further entrench [You] in what comes before [You], I turn now to the racist Arthur de Gobineau who offers a very early perspective on settler colonialism and coloniality. It demands a rhetorical, technological, and decolonial-centered analysis that has implications for the *raison d’être* for the WC.

The institutions which the dead master[s] had invented, the laws he had prescribed, the custom he had initiated—all these live after him . . . so long as even their shadows remain [e.g., monuments], the building[s] stands [e.g., economic, authorial, educational, political, and knowledge], the body seems to have a soul, the pale ghost walks. (1915, p. 33)

I quote Gobineau at length. First, to submit the WC as a haunted/ing entity that reproduces an asymmetrical didactic relation between the center and the arrivant

who will never have arrived; whether the WC wants to colonize its students is a moot point as it is always already at the service of the *idea of the university*.<sup>54</sup> Second, to nuance conversations on what has lived-on as a *public secret* after the making of Gringo-centers:<sup>55</sup> a *coloniality of instruction-and-curriculum*, a medium in which settler knowledge on appropriateness-correctness becomes factual and the tool by which well-meaning and good-intentioned ambivalent actor-agents manage and control epistemic obedience, all predicated on the pretext of spatial and temporal colonial difference, laws of Man-Human-Rights, and subtext for coloniality of power.<sup>56</sup> And third, to underscore the role WCs play within power insofar as power is in part an epistemological, ideological, rhetorical, and aesthetic war on information. Gobineau understood then that the world was being staged for a haunting-and-ghostly totality and spaces-places like the WC are but the theaters in which the settler play lives-on and flourishes. It is for these three reasons that I argue the WC cannot be saved but can be a space-place of constant struggle both to unsettle the settled and to advance the cause of the racialized, minoritized, and marginalized—a strategic reassembling of the WC as decolonizing centers initiating decolonizing archival impressions.

This essay is also about what must come after [You]. WCS, like WRS, has gravitated to antiracist, social-justice, and now decolonial discourses. It appears both have indeed arrived, as we bear witness to the rise of diversity statements on job applications, antiracist statements posted on websites, and the performance of land acknowledgments at conferences.<sup>57</sup> For the university, this presents the opportunity to flex its power to absorb and tokenize resistance; for the humanities, this affords the occasion to tout diversity, equity, and inclusion; for departments, this offers the opportunity to strengthen its gravitas in a time of declining majors; for WCs, this validates optimism the WC can be saved and made anew;<sup>58</sup> and for some of [You], this provides the possibility of overcoming whiteness. So, will WCS merely graft itself upon projects as WRS has historically done to posture activism and postulate radicalized democratic spaces, or will it undertake the ethic, ethos, and praxis of hope-struggle?<sup>59</sup> Now, as academics, all of [You] are implicated for carrying out work on behalf of a haunted/ing entity.<sup>60</sup> The difference is that between an academic responsibility and an answerability and accountability to an obligation-responsibility.<sup>61</sup> WCs may be uniquely positioned to advance a *decolonial analytic* and *prospective vision*. But it is early days and there is much to be seen. Will [You] remain the match scratcher threatening to burn it all down under the guise of (academic) responsibility, or will [You] be at the service of unsettling the settled including the [You] in [You]?

This essay is lastly about what must be before, of (present), and after [You]. I am not interested in whether “decolonized” WCs will have arrived. For those who have

follow my work, [You] know I am beyond skeptical. I am not interested in debating decolonial agendas since I am not indigenous or Native American myself—I have no right to weigh in on how they advance their cause. Like Fanon, I approach the agenda to return land and the rehabilitation of [We/arth] as two sides of the same coin (see *TW*, p. 44). Above, as I have done over the years, I preliminarily sketched out from memories the innerworkings of an epistemic-oriented decolonial project. I invoke “decolonial” to pay homage to what was right in front of me—the intellectual roots of *analytic tasks* and the heritage of *prospective visions*. I have derived a certain epistemological framework from such archival research. It is a framework that pairs well with Derrida’s politics of memory, inheritance, and generations and Avery Gordon’s epistemological framework for the living. An *epistemological framework for the haunted* takes seriously Linda Alcoff’s calls to revitalize reconstructive work in epistemology and engage in productions of truth more responsible to the complexities of reality and to political realities. It centers Fanon’s plea for building a world of the [You] at the same time it expands a wor(1)ding of a future of [We/arth] that demands engagement between the living, nonliving, and nonhuman. I animated it above through an archive approach and will return to it at the tail end of this essay, because this decolonizing archival impression must live-on (*sur-vie*) and flourish beyond this immediate setting and context.

## THE [YOU] WITHIN YOU

Decolonial conversations are vast in scope and breadth. I will not rehash them but there is the *analytical task*, *prospective vision*, and repatriation of land movement(s). It really depends on the intellectual heritage and roots being traced. Before I was introduced to the MCC there were the teaching of spaces, places, and people familiar to me who underscored the [We] and the [Earth]. I say this because while I am trained in and work within writing and rhetorical studies (WRS), my undertaking of decolonial work is deeply rooted *elsewhere* and *otherwise*. “Ven paca y ayúdame.” Grandma understood the [Earth] was a prism to see how [We] have–have not cared for all Matter. She had learned to think, feel, and be-with [Earth] in Xilitla, San Luis Potosí, Mexico, then as a single-parent who relied on it to feed the family, and lastly as a field and migrant worker. It was important for Grandma I *know* and *learn*: “Todo esto [the garden, nature, the earth] necesita [Tu] atención porque nos cuida.” I share this memory to further ground how I was situated in epistemological and earthly work:

For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread, and above all, dignity.

But this dignity has nothing to do with the dignity of the human individual: for that human individual has never heard tell of it. (Fanon, *The Wretched*, 2004, p. 44)

Many scholars only cite the first part of Fanon's passage above. I feature the entirety to advance my position on decolonization. *Seeds or germs of decay* have been sowed deeply and contaminated thoroughly [Earth] and the [You] within [You]. [It] must be *searched out* and *mercilessly rooted* out of both.<sup>62</sup> Now, the work of my work has never weighed in on what Native and/or Indigenous people should do to advance their hopes-struggles for wor(l)ding a future *otherwise*. I do get the frustration with episteme/ological work though. I as well as others in WRS have voiced our concerns: will the human work-projects amount to more than a mode of rhetorical production grounded in the exception, proper, etymological-epistemological roots of policing, and university accounting and administration (García & Cortez, 2020, p. 105; Cortez & García, 2022, p. 584; Browne, 2021, pp. 55–56)? Evolving from being a conditionally admitted student to being a conditionally included scholar in Gringodemia, I choose to use my training and position today to *unsettle the settled-ness* whether in my research or within the classroom. A slow and deep doing at the level of epistemology and ontology is hardly a choice at all but a demand. It reflects a decolonial hope and decolonizing agenda to strategically reassemblage our archives as decolonizing archival impression and the entities for which we work as decolonizing ones.

The WC believes it too can contribute to conversations on a decolonial option. It is taken up in dissertations as decolonial theory, methodology, lenses, analyses, and/or approaches (see Coenen, 2019; Krishnamurthy, 2022; Newman, 2021; Sales, 2021; Wagner, 2021). Now, there are a range of articles and chapters within WC studies (WCS) that reference “decolonial” either in passing or by proxy of other scholarship mentioned (see Azima; Camarillo; Cichhino et al.; Cirillo-McCarthy; Connor & Clinger; Hull & Pettit; Khoo & Huo; Lockett; Galván & Monty; Monty; Natarajan et al.; Nordstrom; Rahimian; Robinson et al.; Salazar et al.; Segrest & Coy; Sicari et al.; Their et al.). But I am more interested in WC scholarship that engages specifically with a decolonial option. This means I will not revisit or relitigate below how WCs impart grand narratives (McKinney), ground systems based on race (Grimm), sustain-reproduce hegemonic institutional discourse (Boquet), uphold power relations (Geller et al.; Greenfield & Rowan; Villanueva), and/or are moving forward with postcolonial, social justice and/or antiracist initiatives (Barron & Grimm; Bawarshi & Pelkowski; Bennet; Davila; DeCiccio; Dees et al.; Diab et al.; Esters; Ozias & Godbee; Weaver; Zhang et al.). Below, and in chronological order, I will only trace U.S.-based WC decolonial threads out of its archive. Any oversight below is mine alone.

There is a slight tick up of WC decolonial conversations between 2018 and 2021. The first to mention is Marilee Brooks-Gillies's article, “Constellations across

Cultural Rhetorics and Writing Centers.” They call attention to how WCs are spaces-places where power and power dynamics unfold. Out of a cultural rhetorics orientation, Brooks-Gillies stories how WCs can embrace a decolonial option and unsettle the settled-ness of master narratives, institutional and epistemic racism, and WC practice. Arguing that “true decolonial work in writing centers requires the presence of a cultural rhetorics emphasis,” they support this by claiming that the “focus here is on relationships—not on static objects but on interactions and connections across time and space” (n.p.). Brooks-Gillies refers to the work WCs do as human work with the human project of making knowledge and building relationships with others that will influence how we all walk and see the world and interact and exchange meaning with others—pluriversality. A praxis of relationality and reciprocity, they contend, is how the WC can embrace decolonial options.

In 2019, Eric Camarillo published “Burn the House Down.” The goal? To deconstruct the *idea of a WC*. He takes up a decolonial framework, specifically from the angle of *becoming* decolonial agents. Camarillo argues, “We must work to decolonize the writing center space, thereby moving away from the regulatory function the writing center has historically performed” (n.p.). Then came the 2021 article, “Flourishing as Anti-Racist Praxis,” by Zandra Jordan. They center the experience of Black women tutors and the ways they are disadvantaged by colonial embodiments of white privilege from a WPA perspective. The central claim is that it is “incumbent upon us to take up the decolonial project of negating Black women tutors’ erasure and protecting their flourishing” (n.p.). Jordan sees this unfolding in the unsettling of the settled-ness of policies and practices that manifest as racism and/or white supremacy in the WC. Lastly, there is Roberta Kjesrud’s contribution, “Placemaking through Learner-Based Design,” which is a stark reminder that decolonization is not a metaphor but quite frankly a literal actioning toward futures *otherwise*. What they determine is needed is a set of heuristics rooted in and attentive to the specificities and particularities in which hauntings and haunting situations unfold (2021, pp. 25–30).

The groundwork for a decolonial option with/in the WC comes into view in 2022 as scholars contend with colonial structures and its systems of power. For example, Handi Banat in “Crossing through Borderlines of Identification and Non-Identification” speaks of asymmetrical relations of power and systems of domination-control that haunt them, the WC, faculty relationships, and face-to-face consultations. The article is focused on remaining open to and being intentional with multiple identifications to nuance engagement in cross-cultural communication. This twofold approach of being attentive to power (policing, controlling, regulating) and intentional listening underscores how Banat pursues a decolonizing of the knowledge ownership agenda and a prospective vision of building healthy relationships with others predicated on the principle of coexistence (2022, pp. 12–13, 21).

Part of decolonial work is recognizing and acknowledging hauntings and haunting situations. In “Arriving, Becoming, Unmaking,” Sonya Eddy, Katherine Bridgman, Sarah Burchett, Juan Escobedo, Marissa Galvin, Randee Schmitt, and Lizbett Tinoco do just that. They locate Texas A&M-San Antonio on Yanawana lands, identify the colonial violence that emerged from Spanish missions, and name the ways the WC supports the settler-colonist project through education, language ideology, policy-making, and policing. And this is important because decolonial work must be attentive to the specificities and particularities in which hauntings and haunting situations unfold (2022, p. 22).<sup>63</sup> They collectively appeal for an unsettling of the settled, call for a disruption of and divestment from complicities, and encourage a remaking of the otherwise—spaces-places, relationships—in the wake of coloniality and the settler-colonialist project of the university. Specifically, they take up Ana Ribero and Sonia Arellano’s scholarship on *comadrisimo* to constellate and story hauntings and haunting situations, efforts to un/re-make WCs, and visions for wor(l)ding change *otherwise*. “[I]t is through these relationships,” the collective argue, “that we enact institutional change,” a change that sees “how theory” can “work in practice” (p. 19). Because in relationship building, they claim, it is no longer about conquering, domination, management, and/or control but rather about a becoming that engages “each other as a whole people” (p. 21).

The importance of building relationships otherwise cannot be ignored within decolonial work. There is the collective article “Listening Across,” in which Marilee Brooks-Gillies, Varshini Balaji, KC Chan-Brose, and Kelin Hull take a cultural rhetorics approach to investigate, narrate, and story lived experiences with/in powers structures of WCs. They refer to this as a *listening across framework*, a decolonial practice that “interrogates and disrupts practices that reinforce colonial structures and ways of knowing,” in which the authors recognize and acknowledge they are entangled (2022, pp. 6, 8, 22). The article stands apart insofar as it attempts to genealogically thread decolonial conversations, and its authors are frank about complicities, hopes-struggles, and im/possibilities. The accumulated narrativizing of stories underscores an ethic, ethos, and praxis of *becoming ready* to think, feel, and be-with others *otherwise*. It would have the effect of unsettling the desire to be from a proper place, speak the proper words, identify a proper way, and/or listen properly (p. 22). The collective write, “We had focused on who has the truest experience instead of acknowledging in a meaningful way that each story was true” (p. 22). And therein lies a revitalization of reconstructive work in epistemology responsible to realities and the messiness of the everyday (see Alcoff, 2011). They are in essence talking about Quijano’s intercultural communication.<sup>64</sup>

But it is important to remember that coloniality is the primary condition of possibility for a decolonial option. Isaac Wang’s article “Our Theories of Race Will not



Save Us” (2022) is perhaps the standout here. It deals with coloniality, the idea of race, epistemic racism, and power. In their insightful analysis of Asao Inoue’s address at the 2019 Conference on College Composition and Communication, we are reminded that decolonization remains on unsettled grounds because the actor-agents who take up its charge in the context of power ultimately foreground an epistemological-ontological framework rooted in modern/colonial discourse (n.p.).<sup>65</sup> (Now, it is neither here nor there on whether Wang’s overall argument for both unsettling the settled-ness of WC pedagogies and engaging in relationships *otherwise* is satisfactory.) Perhaps the most important question asked in the essay is, “What are the connections, threads, and ties that bind us?” Why? Because it gets at Alcoff’s appeal that we (re)learn how to revitalize reconstructive work in epistemology responsible to realities and the messiness of our everyday. Because the question enters the threshold of imagining a future *otherwise*—the beyond of what is settled, the grounding of the [We] and [Earthly] relations, a thinking, feeling, and being-with others (broadly conceived) *elsewhere* and *otherwise*.

Then there is the work of Brooks-Gillies once more who as director of the University Writing Center shifted the orientation of the UWC to position it as an asset. By doing this, they situated the UWC strategically to carry out antiracist and decolonial agendas. This is necessary, Brooks-Gillies claims, as WC so often reinforce mainstream hegemonic understandings of assimilationist practices, dominant literacy and writing systems, and individuality. The article speaks to the benefits and limitations of a decolonial orientation. The former, of course, being that structural changes are needed, and so, such an orientation centers for them both the opportunity to interrogate “existing beliefs and understandings” (p. 130) and the opening to support a pluriversity of histories, knowledges, and language practices (p. 126). Brooks-Gillies writes:

By making space for “unique cultural and personal histories, language, and language practices,” we recognize that writing is just one type of meaning making that students participate in and to support them as writers we need to consider the systems that we all participate in and how their histories as people have had an impact on them as writers. (2022, p. 126)

The passage above lays claim to the idea that White mainstream English and Academic writing are not the only systems of value particularly as different people—their bodies, cultures, and communities—engage in a fluidity of ethnolinguistic and writing practices. So, for Brooks-Gillies, a decolonial orientation lends itself to recognizing and valuing the humanity of all (p. 28). On the other hand, though, they are frank with readers: a decolonial orientation can foment discomfort, resistance,



aggression, defensiveness, and even burnout. Still, the central premise sustains itself throughout the chapter: “We must listen to stories of embodied experiences and work across our differences as we restructure what it means to do writing center work together” (p. 133). The chapter brings to the fore the *analytic task* and *prospective vision* of a decolonial option that has everything to do with wor(l)ding self(ves) and futures *otherwise*. As Brooks-Gillies asserts, “We need to live different stories,” or in other words, work toward the possibilities of new stories—*an-other* archive (p. 135).

*Praxis* also came out with a special issue under its blog banner wholly dedicated to grounding decolonial theory in practice. The issue, “Imagining the Decolonizing Writing Center,” features an editorial entry alongside twelve contributions. The editors, Kiara Walker and Kaitlin Passafiume, set the stage with a series of questions: “Can we decolonize writing center spaces? . . . Can we even use the word ‘decolonize’ without returning the land on which our institutions operate, to their original owners?” (2022, n.p.). Though the questions are as aspirational as they are knotty, they hope-struggle toward wor(l)ding futures *otherwise*. “[W]e,” the editors appeal to readers, “must accept decolonizing work as a key feature of our new reality” (n.p.). Now, the entries themselves are brief. And not all take up a decolonial option explicitly. Still, important questions are asked: How can the world work toward decolonization (Reamer)? How can we create an antiracist WC and be a decolonial agent (Wright)? How do we unlearn the colonial worldview of knowing and assigning value in proximity to whiteness (Cahoy)? How do we better inspire confidence and motivate writers whose home languages are not English (DeCiccio)? How do we square WC goals of decolonizing with student needs and disciplinary expectations (Gardner and Watkins)? How do we translate a decolonial agenda in practical and concrete ways to further decolonize WCs (Devet; Daut & Rebe)?

Though not all entries take up a decolonial agenda, several do. There is the entry by Matthew Louie, “Mindful Language-Use.” It draws attention to how the “actions” of some might “obscure what decolonization means for indigenous peoples and their fights for land reparation and sovereignty” (2022, n.p.). Louie reflects on how we might go about reconciling the decolonial project that experiences convergences and divergences among and across peoples. Because as Mignolo and Walsh write, “The answer to the question, ‘what does it mean to decolonize?’ has to be “answered by looking at other W questions: Who is doing it, where, why, and how?” (2018, p. 108). What Louie proposes is a shift in the register from outcome to aspiring toward. Louie, in other words, is underscoring a doing: normalizing language differences, challenging WCs as an acculturation site, and being aware and intentional with *where* human work-projects are pursued. Then there is Dani Putney and A. Poythress’s entry, who advance an argument for unsettling the settled-ness of boundaries: of our self(ves);

of spaces-places we occupy as academics-tutors; of colonial relations (2022, n.p.). The unsettling and queering of boundaries for them helps make a decolonial future possible.

Is a paradigmatic shift and decolonial orientation for WCs possible? Douglas Kern and Ella Raynor seems to believe so, who situate linguistic justice efforts and antiracism projects as endeavors that help decolonize WCs. Exploration of ethno-linguistic identities, examination of underlying values, the unsettling of systems of oppression (racism, sexism, ableism, etc.), and theory-building actioning of antiracist praxis into practice are at the heart of their human work-projects there (2022, n.p.). Janice Lark would also seem to concur, who sees open-mindedness, respect, responsibility, and accountability as central tenets at the heart of decolonization. In other words, it involves an ethic, ethos, and praxis of thinking, feeling, and being-with others *otherwise*. Writing on difference, they note, “collaboration augments feelings of being Welcome, Respected, Safe, and Accepted, which move a writing center ever close to decolonization” (2022, n.p.). How? Because collaboration, for Lark, underscores a common humanity and commitment to growth; *stories-so-far* and the *possibilities of new stories*.

I would be remiss if I did not include Jasmine Tang’s (2022) work here even though it does not take up a decolonial option under the proper name. The article claims WCs are wrapped up in the hauntings and haunting situations of U.S. imperialism (land theft, Manifest Destiny, enslavement), racial power (white supremacy), and white-savior narratives, which produce absences-silences. Specifically, Tang focuses on the *epistemic erasure* of Asians and Asian Americans, and the ways WC policies, supervisory practices, and consulting practices reproduce it. (The significance of epistemic erasure, like epistemic racism, is that it implicates everyday humans and their human work-projects.) The goal of the essay is to work toward a self-reflexive praxis for racial justice: “thinking about our racialized embodied histories becomes paramount to the potential of equitable, liberatory administrative practice and to our ongoing goal of treating one another . . . with humanity and love.” It is when historical perspective and context are lost, Tang argues, that they lead to the devaluing, dismissal, and/or erasure of others in the WC. Perhaps the most haunted/ing yet most important question, though, comes at the end of the essay, which I paraphrase so that its meaning can apply more broadly: Is the WC worth our labor of unsettling the settled?

Decolonial conversations persisted in 2023. There is the chapter “Anti-Colonialist Listening as Writing Pedagogy,” in which Melba Vélez Ortiz reflects on their journey within WRS as a Puerto Rican whose historical and generational baggage consists of the hauntings and haunting situations of U.S. occupation, oppression, marginalization, and exploitation. Out of that cultural milieu they advance a decolonial

agenda vis-à-vis the praxis of anticolonialist listening and becoming a decolonial agent. Though not wholly situated within WCs, overall, the article expands decolonial conversations across disciplinary spheres on the benefit and limits of anticolonialist pedagogies in the wake of global imperialism and colonialism. Ortiz argues, “Carrying out an anti-colonial politic means challenging . . . unquestioned assumptions and presuppositions while providing a space where growth and mindfulness of difference . . . can flourish” (2023, p. 332).

There is also the revised article by Brian Hotson and Stevie Bell (2023). The authors cast WCs as neocolonial tools for cultural diplomacy initiatives. The goal of the essay is to consider whether decolonizing aspirations can counter the neocolonial goals of state actors against the backdrop of settler colonial agendas and U.S. imperialism. Hotson and Bell trace the rise of foreign policy, the internationalization of higher education, and the role government-funded agencies play in carrying out neocolonial enterprises (controlling, commodifying, exporting) across global contexts. They claim international WCs are not exempt from systems of soft power, often advancing national, political, and economic interests as well as American ideologies-ideals vis-à-vis Western educational models on behalf of governmental agencies. Recognizing how WCs are coopted as neocolonial public diplomacy initiatives and acknowledging the ways global coloniality and rhetorics of modernity—salvation, progress, development—filter through international WCs, Hotson and Bell provide several recommendations for WCs to work toward decolonizing. First, that WC leadership (editors to peer reviewers to directors) be improved. Second, that multi-regional organizational structure networked with multidirectional dialoguing and coequal collaboration-cooperation be created. And third, that a careful reckoning be had on power dynamics.

Decolonial conversations have also been extended within the context of contingent workers in the WC. In “Contingency as a Barrier to Decolonial Engagement,” Grace Lee-Amuzie recognizes the pervasiveness of colonial thinking and identity politics (e.g., colonial epistemologies) and acknowledges the way they unfold through systems of racial and linguistic hierarchies, epistemic racism, and policies in spaces-places such as the WC. A central claim surfaces within conversation on the racialized power dynamics of F-2-F consultations: “Without making conscious efforts to decolonize our thinking and practice, we are likely to privilege the already privileged and to continue to fail to listen to multilingual students who are in the margin” (2023, p. 44). Despite the unstable and precarious conditions of contingent workers, Lee-Amuzie advances a decolonial stance, an “unlearning the familiar habits of seeing, knowing, and relating,” vis-à-vis decolonial listening (p. 47). What they are getting at is the possibilities of a learning-unlearning-relearning path for the WC.

## Early Days

Several points need to be made about the previous section. Louie argues that instead of “forgoing talking about decolonizing completely” we need to be more deliberative and intentional (2022, n.p.). I agree. To my first set of points then. A decolonial option is not about advancing the WC’s mission or about creating safe-brave spaces, hiring practices, antiracist training, and/or developing linguistic diversity in the WC to save it (see Wright; Kern & Raynor; DeCiccio; Gardner & Watkins). It is not a feminist (see Reamer), queer (Putney), or cultural rhetorics project (see Brooks-Gillies), at least, not under those settled-proper headings, though it surely requires the *longings* of such work. It is not another method/ology for talking about power, race, oppression, and white privilege. It is an epistemological, political, and ethical commitment to unsettling the grounds on which centers of powers and projects of territorial and epistemological expropriation take root. It is, and it must be, simultaneously an unsettling of the settled-ness of our cultural and thinking programs so that we can engage in wor(l)ding project *otherwise*. WCs must be deliberative and intentional in working from such premises, which historically and writ-large has not been done. The abundance of silence (including my own) on the historical and recent hauntings and haunting situation in Palestine is just one example of how neither WCS nor the well-meaning and good-intentioned ambivalent actor-agent has arrived. Will either ever have arrived? Epistemic obedience to the status quo and epistemic disobedience are not two sides of the same coin, though they share in common that one word. Overall, delinking, whether in the context of an analytic or the epistemic, applies to all deterministic assumptions because otherwise we risk falling back into the *old house while just changing the carpet*: exceptionalism, fundamentalism, and/or propriety.<sup>66</sup>

Second, if WCS is going to contribute to decolonial scholarship that is taken seriously, it need not be an echo chamber. WC scholars need to engage in genealogical tracing: what school of thought on decoloniality is one working from? WC scholars need to be involved in the work of analyzing settler colonialism and coloniality concretely and even grappling with contradictions, limitations, and/or inadequacies of a decolonial option.<sup>67</sup> For instance, when Putney and Poythress talk about a settler colonial context, it appears as if it unfolds evenly. As if, that is to say, power unfolds evenly. Surely, global coloniality and modernities exist. But there is a common consensus from Mignolo to Tsing to Tuck & Yang that a decolonial project cannot be separated from the specificities and particularities in which it manifests and unfolds. It truly is back to the basics with an emphasis on the *semiotic apparatus of enunciation*: who, what, when, where, and how.<sup>68</sup> What are colonial systems and hegemonic settings? Who are its knowing subjects (actors-agents)? What do enunciations and

material exchanges via language entail? How do institutions comprise a locus of enunciation?<sup>69</sup> Otherwise, what Cahoy refers to as hegemonic discourse, power arrangements, and colonial worldviews of knowing and pedagogy become just as ambiguous as arguing everything is white supremacy or coloniality. The outcome, as a result, is empty signifiers. Such ambiguity, however, underscores perhaps why Devet overlooks how the very *idea of the writing center* was predicated on dominating, managing, and controlling epistemic obedience. We have to know both what we are decolonizing and how it works.<sup>70</sup>

Third, the *idea of the writing center* cannot hold. Each contribution above makes clear WCs are haunted/ing spaces, existing within and on wounded/ing places, entangled with and complicit in the epistemic murk of a haunted/ing *structure of feeling* vis-à-vis our human work-projects.<sup>71</sup> This is not conjecture or “just rhetoric”—after all, epistemological hegemony is constituted, ideologies are carried over, hegemony is maintained, and epistemic racism is expanded and disputed in and through literacy, images, signs, sound, and rhetoric. The *idea of the writing center* is the *working part* of the *idea of the university*, which is the device of the *idea of the Americas*. If I have sowed doubt here, from the WC archive there is a 1950 article, “The Writing Clinic and the Writing Laboratory.” In it, Robert Moore sheds light on how “clinics” and “laboratories,” which he understood as interchangeable, were “devices” within the university whose ends were to diagnose the problem, treat or carry out remedial measures, and ultimately remove deficiencies. He exemplifies thus how actor-agents are the receptacle of and the vehicle by which the *idea* as a technology remains on the move and performed:

“remedial agencies for removing students’ deficiencies in composition”  
(p. 388)

“The more intelligent and eager the student . . . the easier it is to discover the difficulty in the first place and to determine means to enable him to remove it.”  
(p. 390)

“With the laboratory, as with the clinic and all other remedial devices, satisfactory results are most readily secured when the student, whatever the means of his coming, is personally convinced of the desirability of improving his writing skill.” (p. 392)

“Most of them [universities] offer the service without charge, accepting the handling of remedial composition problems as a necessary, if deplorable, part of the task of American colleges and universities.” (p. 393)

Today, we call clinics or laboratories the WC.<sup>72</sup> A decolonial standpoint would recognize how Moore’s rhetoric is steeped in an epistemic system and designs of a

500-year-old modern/colonial and settlerizing archive while a decolonial framework acknowledges how his *idea* of removing deficiencies is a by-product of the entanglement between coloniality and modernity/rationality; the entanglement that equates feeling with Reason, thought with Truth, certain beings with deficiencies. And a decolonial perspective would ask, where did Moore get such ideas? Now, whether he read cultural texts between the Renaissance and Enlightenment period is really beside the point here. Moore is participating in a type of discourse steeped in the *idea of the Americas*. The unmaking of Gringo-centers I advanced years ago was less about rhetorical effect and more about getting to the bottom and thus making visible a rhetoric of a space-place that is the by-product of modern/colonial and settlerizing designs and its technologies including the *idea*.<sup>73</sup> After all, [it] is so often invisible and inaudible to the “eyes” and “ears” of those who have not learned to see and listen and rather just look and hear.<sup>74</sup> And that is why Maldonado-Torres in part describes the decolonial turn as about “making visible the invisible,” analyzing “the mechanisms that produce such invisibility,” and intervening at the “level of power, knowledge, and being through varied actions” (2007, p. 262).

I join today scholars who see the university as a pillar, in assemblage with, and is itself an assemblage of modern/colonial and settlerizing designs.<sup>75</sup> And if they are not enough, we can once again return to the WC archive. In it there is Stephen North’s “The Idea of a Writing Center.” Though he wrote a revision, this version underscores the *raison d’être* and the parallels in the *idea*. North was somewhat of a visionary. I believe he understood that though it was impossible to decolonize the university—“We cannot change that context [the idea of the university]”—there was the possibility and indeed the demand to initiate doings otherwise—“all we can do is help the writer learn how to operate in it and other contexts like it” (1984, p. 441)—which I refer to as decolonizing archival impressions. While he unsettled *coloniality of instruction-and-curriculum* and changed the content of the “old” idea—“only logical *raison d’être* must be to handle those others—those . . . with ‘special problems’” (p. 435)—by replacing it with the “new” writing center, he does not change the terms—the principles, the assumptions, the rules.<sup>76</sup> As the reorganizer of the machinery, North rewired the “device” in haunting ways. And like Moore, he too was the vehicle for the *idea* as a technology to be performed:

“that writing centers define their province in terms of a given curriculum, taking over those portions of it that ‘regular teachers are willing to cede or, presumably, unable to handle’” (p. 438)

“This new writing center, then, defines its province not in terms of some curriculum, but in terms of the writers it serves.” (p. 438)

“In a writing center the object is to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction.” (p. 438)

“must measure their success . . . in terms of changes in the writer . . . they . . . are charged to change it: to interfere, to get in the way” (p. 439)

“Occasionally we manage to convert such writers from people who have to see us to people who want to.” (p. 440)

I believe North, like the WC decolonial scholars, understood power but could not see modern/colonial and settlerizing designs. I am not contending with the idea that chance encounters can mutually change people. I am contesting the invention of concepts like the idea of the “new” WC—the idea of academic writing as the “ritual of composing” and the charge to change the nature; the idea of instruction that re-consigns the status of the *other* based on differences observed in the ritual of composing; the Hegelian-esque idea of the observer observing, making sense of difference, and observing difference some more; the idea of the holist participant-observer who in an organic unity of living systems re-entrenches a reductionist vision of reality that in the words of Quijano (and Dussel) re-links both to the “same rules of hierarchy” that imagines an *Other-as-possessions-of-the-Same* and to the “action of one sole logic” (2007, p. 175).

Within a holist image of reality, the university is still the system, the WC its devices of appropriateness-correctness, the appropriate-correct its actor-agents, the medium of management and control capital [L] Language and Literacy. There is no room for the *other*, they are subsumed, the possessions of actor-agents to be bettered and the burden of North’s pedagogy of intervention (*coloniality of instruction-and-curriculum*)—the ego’s material whose origins are tied to the *idea of the Americas*. Both Moore and North’s rhetoric are reminiscent of the Spanish friars and Jesuits who invented the idea of the *other* as contrary to and different (less knowing : less human), and who couched a proper arrivant in the language (ir/re)deemability. The WC of the past and present attempts to foster community and extend hospitality but both, to borrow some words from Derrida, “welcomes without welcoming the stranger” (1994, p. 217). Will community or a hospitality ever have arrived as more than a metonym for the preservation of the *idea*? The *idea of the writing center* cannot be decolonized. Because if a proper arrival and arrivant is known in advance, then that is a preparation of decolonial work unsuitable for anyone. Will community or hospitality ever have arrived in the *non-name of all* rather than as a reference to a specific name, group, or other formal representations of identification? From North’s “new,” we discern the meaning of modern/colonial—a union in which the “old” remains constitutive of the new insofar that the presupposition both of an “entry” in the time of the *other* and the charge to “change” the nature of the *other*



continues. If the WC is going to become a decolonizing center, it needs to get to the bottom—designs and technologies.<sup>77</sup>

But I am interested in what comes after critique. Because who am I to say what decolonial work means? That would be a reduction to facts of essence.<sup>78</sup> Who am I to say WCS cannot do decolonial work? That would be decolonial determinism. Rather, within the intellectual universe of decolonial thought I prescribe to—one that holds dignity is tied to land and that human dignity needs rehabilitation (*The Wretched* 44)—we are implored to ask: Who is doing decolonial work and where is its praxis unfolding? What actions, processes, and practices are being enacted and engaged toward decolonization and with whom? Why are they doing decolonial work and does it aim for an-other option for thinking, feeling, being, and doing *otherwise*? How are they contending with the specificities and particularities of coloniality of power, being, and knowledge so as to make a decolonial option a lived project of and in praxis?<sup>79</sup> The previous section spoke to such questions already. So, I choose to think, feel, and be-with WCS, “to think from and with standpoints, struggles, and practices, from and with praxical theorizings, conceptual theorizings, theoretical conceptualizings, and theory-building actioning” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 20). Thus, I find myself asking, how might we build on and improve what I would consider as *stories-so-far* in the WC? Below are some thoughts:

- If WCS are going to undertake a decolonial option, it is imperative WC scholars know they cannot be anticolonial without the epistemological, political, and ethical commitments of being anti-epistemic racism and anticapitalism.<sup>80</sup>
- If WCS are going to undertake a decolonial option, it is essential to trace the convergences and divergences between settler colonialism and coloniality; understand the distinctions between colonization and coloniality and decolonialism and decoloniality; and develop rhetorical, technological, and decolonial-centered frameworks for analyses.<sup>81</sup>
- If WCS are going to undertake a decolonial option, it is vital both to think through the specificities and particularities in which modern/colonial and settlerizing archive and its designs and technologies manifest and unfold, triangulate technological rhetoricities, and contribute more comprehensive versions and richer notions of the ways the WC fits within it all.
- If WCS are going to undertake a decolonial option, it is crucial to recognize and acknowledge one cannot decolonize being without decolonizing knowledge. Thus, WC scholars must determine for themselves and at the same time see themselves partaking in a much larger conversation of (epistemic) delinking, epistemological decolonization, epistemic reconstitution, and pluriversity if they are to do “decolonial” work beyond a proper name or heading.



So, how does the WC go from *stories-so-far* to being-and-becoming the *possibilities of new stories*? Now, it is important for me to pause here. Yes, as Linda Smith (1999) argues, “Knowledge and the power to define what counts as real knowledge lie at the epistemic core of colonialism” (p. xii). One goal, thus, is to make “visible the invisible” and both analyze the “mechanisms that produce such invisibility” and intervene at the “level of power, knowledge, and being through varied actions” (“On Coloniality,” p. 262).<sup>82</sup> The goal is to expose the *structure of feeling*, make the *public secret* known, and short-circuit or delink the complicity between rhetorics of modernity and a logic of domination, management, and control (coloniality). But decolonization does not mean “a total rejection” (Smith, 1999, p. 39). This situates us squarely on truth claims and productions of knowledge. Again, I return to Alcoff, whose call to revitalize work in epistemology centers on producing truth claims more responsible to the complexities of reality and to political realities rather than idealized reconstructions (2011, p. 70). It is beyond the scope and breadth of this essay to trace this charge further, but I do encourage [You] to *carefully reckon* with Escobar’s *ethnographies of modernity/coloniality* (2007, p. 192) and Tsing’s *ethnographies of connections* (2005, p. xi) to understand the significance of Alcoff’s call.

So, I return to a question posed above. How might we build on and improve what has come before [You]? Or, perhaps, we ought to return to the cited WCS above and consider what they invite? I would argue conversations on decolonial work and the interrogation of “deep-seated assumptions about language and identity” invite a return to home, a space-place and feeling (“Embracing,” Brooks-Gillies, 2022, p. 129). But of course, one cannot story for the sake of storytelling, so what are *returns* without *careful reckonings*? The kind of reckonings, perhaps, that come with recognizing and addressing the global coloniality of international WCs (Hotson & Bell)? I would claim such reckonings come through in conversations both about attending to the “fuller picture [vis-à-vis locating, identifying, and naming] of the sociopolitical forces [and epistemic erasure] at play” in WCs (Tang) and about the practices of performativity amid the hiring of more racially diverse consultants (see Jordan, 2021, p. 36; Wright, 2022, n.p.). But even then, one could ask, what are *returns* and *careful reckonings* without the *enduring* and ongoing task of *there-ness*? I would assert that statements about “active engagement” and a “decolonial future [that] values multiple identities, multiple notions of change, multiple voices, and multiple stories” invite *playful world traveling* and *generous reciprocity*, which are enduring and ongoing processes (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2022, pp. 24, 32). And all these questions situate us squarely on another. Perhaps it is not intended to be read this way, but I see the avowal “our arrival at the center is not an end goal” as one way to ask, what are *returns*, *careful reckonings*, and *enduring tasks* without being-and-becoming recognizable to self(ves), others, and communities *otherwise* (Eddy et al., 2022, p. 21)? What I am getting at is the demand for something else.

## An Epistemological Framework for the Haunted

All the contributions above suggest that the work of WCs ought to be theory-building actioning. I interpret that as a call for initiating decolonizing archival impressions, which I translate as the strategic re-assembling both of our archives as decolonizing archival impressions and the WC as decolonizing centers. This decolonial hope and decolonizing agenda is not about saving the WC but laboring toward the *possibilities of new stories*—*an-other* archive. It is about laboring toward pluriversality in the face of a post-era myth. The MCC, which again is the intellectual heritage-roots I work from, believe that by changing the terms and contents of all conversations, vis-à-vis (epistemic) delinking, epistemological decolonization, and epistemic reconstitution, we can lay the groundwork of and for pluriversality. Pluriversality requires diverse approaches, theories, and frameworks that position us to be present and be a witness to hauntings and haunting situations, because only then can we intervene in them. I have offered an archive approach and a theory of (decolonizing) archival impressions—entries imposed with either the desire or the hope-struggle to cover over, impress new meaning, and reconstruct *an (-other)* archive. And now, as I bring this essay to a close, I offer an *epistemological framework for the haunted* facilitated by *deep rhetoricity*.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to relitigate the *analytical tasks*, *prospective visions*, and repatriation of land movement(s) that constitute decolonial options across space-time. A throughline, however, is that sense of obligation and responsibility to be deliberative and intentional. But where are those lessons being proposed from? The affordance of an archive approach is that it does not take this question for granted, which is a root-cause in academia for automatic equations—because one is in higher education we are to assume one does and thinks responsibly. If we are *where we do* and *think*—“I am a turtle,” Anzaldúa writes, “wherever I go I carry ‘home’ on my back” (1999, p. 21)—then hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings must figure prominently in all our doings. An *epistemological framework for the haunted* facilitated by *deep rhetoricity* unsettles the settled-ness of automatic equations because it stations hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings as the starting point in and of all doings. In fact, it treats each as language, rhetoric, and corporeal exercises of address. While at face value such a framework re-consigns the status of a haunted [thing] to archives, it does so only to underscore across all archives the global connection of hauntings and haunting situations. It says, we are all haunted, and then asks, pues, ¿ahora qué?

But why hauntings? First, to call attention to *wounded/ing spaces* and the hauntings that live deep within the bones.<sup>83</sup> Second, to advance a hospitable memory, politics, and rhetoric of hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings and situate them to the

politics of the present.<sup>84</sup> Third, to illuminate how we all are in and part of hauntings and haunting situations.<sup>85</sup> Fanon understood that the [You] will always be haunted (1986, p. 10). He, in many ways, would anticipate Derrida's hauntology, an unsettling of the settled from concepts of justice to Being.<sup>86</sup> I for one invoke hauntings and haunting situations to unsettle the settled idea: of a post-era that is both an attempt at historical amnesia and a desire to keep at bay that which threatens to return an unfavorable reflection; the "traditional" or "learned" status of a "scholar" whose spectatorship adheres to distinctions (the un/real, non/living, and non/human); the grid between coloniality of knowledge, being, and *instruction-curriculum*; and life questions of how to live in-come, welcome, and love an-other predicated on the pretext of a law of what and who can be in-common. Each reflects the delicate balance between a *setting-to-work* and an *ungraspable call*, of knowing we ought to arrive somewhere *otherwise* and not knowing if we will ever have arrived.<sup>87</sup> To have hauntings as a starting point is to engage in productions of truth more responsibly.

To get to hauntings and haunting situations, though, one must commit to an unsettling of the settled. This demands an ethic of a slow and deep (de/re)-composition toward healing [We/arth] that begins with an ethos of bearing witness in unsettling ways and extends into a praxis of unsettling the settled: seeing without being settled with and a doing of plunging into, peeling back layers of, and unsettling what is constituted as legible.<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, the goal is to unlearn-and-relearn how to walk and see the world and interact and exchange meaning with others (living, nonliving, nonhuman) *otherwise*. The conversations at the onset of this essay underscore both the psychology of haunted/ing situations and the undertones of an ethic, ethos, and praxis, the latter of which I argued was passed on for me to pick up, hold on to, learn from, and eventually pass along too—the inner workings of an *epistemological framework for the haunted*, the idea that our lives are archives that can be *returned* to and carefully *reckoned* with, inviting one to learn how to dwell *otherwise* by preparing oneself to *become ready*.

An *epistemological framework for the haunted* stems from my upbringing with *shadow work*—a love, care, healing, and learning ethic. It prioritizes a thinking, feeling, and being-with others (living, nonliving, nonhuman) *otherwise*—a rhetoric of [We/arth]. It is predicated on the idea that a learning-unlearning-relearning path is an *enduring task*. An *epistemological framework for the haunted* is not some utopian vision but rather a recognition that difference does not have to mean the "unequal nature of the 'other'" ("CMR," p. 177), represent and signify "[v]alues and plus and minus degree of humanity" ("Delinking," p. 499), nor be the "basis of domination" ("CMR," p. 177). It is a return, centering, and situating of hauntings, the past, the dead, inheritances, and dwellings to the politics of the present. Thus, no one group can claim to be in possession of and/or be emitting the right signs if we are all haunted. And extrication, which Fanon extended to everyone—"How do we extricate ourselves"

(1986, p. 12)—cannot be reserved for any one group if hauntings live deep in all our bones. But the question becomes how to facilitate such a framework.

*Deep rhetoricity* can help facilitate an *epistemological framework for the haunted*. In our 2022 article “Deep Rhetoricity,” Gesa Kirsch and I recognized and acknowledged rhetoricity already conveys a doing, but in this interpretation, it was important for us to depart from a doing undaunted by hauntings, unscathed by haunting-situations, and unfaced by wounded/ing spaces-places. It was also imperative we conceive of a doing unseated from automatic equations between a position/ality and disposition. *Deep rhetoricity*, as a praxis of intervention and invention, is about (re)learning.<sup>89</sup> Such learning is facilitated by

- *Returning* to our local histories of hauntings, inheritances, and dwellings.
- *Careful reckoning* with self as the place of multiple returns, reckonings, and becomings.
- *Enduringly* getting caught up in and allowing something to remain at work.
- *Being and becoming* recognizable to self(ves), others, and communities otherwise.

The above situate us squarely on *politics of location* (Rich), *situated knowledges* (Haraway), and *theories in the flesh* (Moraga and Anzaldúa). And they do so by conceiving of *stories-so-far* as archives and facilitating the repositioning of its contents to both encourage a position to it *otherwise* and to invite archival impressions *otherwise*. But this is the inward-facing process of *deep rhetoricity*. It also facilitates a slow and deep *doing* to/ward being-and-becoming ready to listen, to bear and be a witness to, and to make room for being-and-thinking-with others. It does so by conceiving of humanity’s *stories-so-far* as an archive and facilitating too the repositioning of its contents to both encourage a position to it *otherwise* and to invite archival impressions *otherwise* with others in mind. The epistemic principles stage a doing that fractures barriers between the living, nonliving, and nonhuman and strives to/ward an ethic, ethos, and praxis of thinking, feeling, and being-with.<sup>90</sup>

*Deep rhetoricity* means a slow and deep (de/re)compositioning toward being-and-becoming *otherwise*. It is here that I see an *epistemological framework for the haunted* and *deep rhetoricity* expanding on Fanon’s vision of “build[ing] the world of the [You]” (p. 231). Both set forth an argument that doing cannot be confined to engagements solely with the living. What would it mean to be in debt to the [We/arth]? If doing is in part about relational exchanges (giving, receiving, reciprocity), [We/arth] radically reframes the logic of the gift as it underscores an obligation and responsibility to all Matter (including rhetoric) living-on [*sur-vie*] and flourishing in the *non-name of all*. If [We] are archives in the making (Browne, 2021, p. 51), the way we wor(l)d today will be felt within the futures of tomorrow. What will [We] have

hoped would live-on (*sur-vie*) after our own de-composition in wor(1)lding [We/arth]? Such a questions reflects a doing-imagining, a praxis-theory.

One way to build on previous WCS on a decolonial option is to incessantly ground a central question of an *epistemological framework for the haunted and deep rhetoricity*. Where are the lessons of ethics, ethos, and praxis being proposed from? Kirsch and I argued that while not all will feel the haunt within their bones, or be aware of the corporeal exercises *others* are forced to face, by taking the above epistemic principles seriously, we can move beyond virtue signaling and engage in deliberative and intentional work otherwise. I believe both the framework and concept above can move us in such a direction. But it is early days—is it by accident that it is more common to see a director in the audience of a conference receptive to a decolonial option but rare to hear from them about their decolonial initiatives? Is it any coincidence that much of WC decolonial conversations are led by members in precarious positions? The difference can be attributed to what Michel de Certeau referred to as tactics, short-lived actions determined by the “absence of a proper locus” (p. 37). The absence of a proper locus means, however, that disruptions to power can only ever be short-lived within a space incapable of being a decolonized place.

It is early days. But how can [We] do the work of a decolonial option if neither antiracism, WCs as power structures, nor benevolent agents of epistemic racism have been adequately contended with?<sup>91</sup> It is early days. The *idea of the WC* was attributed to us by some who have the Right to attribute, welcome, and include.<sup>92</sup> That Right, historically, has had everything to do with the idea of race, an epistemic racism, and a logic to dominate, manage, and control. An Aristotelian philosophy and syndrome!<sup>93</sup> To return to Gobineau, what is the United States, the university, or the WC if not a settler/ed/izing syndrome persevering 500 years later—inventing and defining an identity based on the other; establishing a propriety based on ideal forms of knowledge and understanding; managing the coming and going of bodies; and controlling obedience—preserving 500-year-old designs and technologies as institutions? The shadow of the settler remains in the buildings of democracy, education, the disciplines, and the working parts or devises of the university such as the WC—the pale ghost walks the hallways of democracy, the pages of the archive of ghosts disciplines hitch themselves to, the WCs that welcome without welcoming.

#### *A Decolonizing Archival Impression*

When I think of a/the center, I automatically think of what is or made to be in the periphery. Perhaps that is the world systems theory in me speaking. What makes the center a center? Or, in other words, how is it held together? By an idea? By circulation and flow? What is its modus operandi? Is it domination, management, and/or control? A quick Google search, and I am captivated by a definition,

“the middle point . . . around which anything rotates or revolves.” A center of space [and present of time]! Sometimes, it is hard for me to suppress my inner voice. But surely that is not what is meant by a writing center. I keep scrolling, “a place or group of buildings where a specified activity is concentrated.” *Coloniality of instruction and curriculum!* “Stop it, inner voice!” I keep scrolling. Greek in origin. Kentron, a stationary point of a pair of compasses. The epistemology of the [zero] point! My inner voice is too persistent at times. The center cannot hold because what allowed it to appear and become consequential in the first place was an idea, the *idea of the writing center*.<sup>94</sup> “We start from,” Hegel will argue, “common ideas” (*PoFA*, p. 47). *Ideas*, Immanuel Kant claimed, “are architectonic” (“Physical Geography,” p. 446), by which he meant “art of systems” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 691) that depend “upon an idea of the whole” (*Logic*, p. 101) interconnected by *ends*. The WC is not just a wounded/ing space and place for some but a most central site of an epistemic and aesthetic issue. It was Hegel, after all, who described pedagogy as the “art of making” people “ethical” (*PoR*, p. 161). The Gringo-Center needs unmaking if *the idea of the writing center* is to mean anything other than management and control of epistemic obedience.

### Too Late . . . Too Soon: Will [We/arth] Ever Have Arrived?<sup>95</sup>

It is early days to know whether the “decolonial” in the WC will ever have arrived as anything more than administrative accounting. But I must admit to you, my reader, that something more pressing is on my mind. As I wind down this essay, I find myself enraged with the silence (including my own). “Your silence will not protect you” (Lorde, 2020). We continue to bear witness to the arrival of diversity statements required on job applications, antiracist statements posted on writing center websites, and land acknowledgments presented at conferences. But the university remains a prism, and we its reflectors, by which to see how neither academic responsibility nor silence will save us. As we all bear witness to the 2023 atrocities in the Middle East, it has become even more clear today than it was 75 years ago that Israel and Palestine are a prism by which to see relations of domination unfold as expropriation and dispossession; genocide and dehumanization; the *public secret* and the *epistemic murk*.<sup>96</sup> And [We] are already involved, implicated, and haunted in that story of settler colonialism, colonial states, imperialism, and colonial knowledge production.<sup>97</sup> What Ashraf Rushdy had to say on the spectators of lynching applies hauntingly today to the spectators of crying and dying children:

The spectators, in other words, are not just guilty of looking but also of feeling, smelling, touching, and creating a sound for the full spectacle. And that very

spectacle . . . is a ceremony. . . . It is a complete process in which all are involved . . .  
all guilty of participating. (2012, p. 57)

We are guilty to the extent that we have allowed our [f]ears of being disciplined to trump the demand to speak the t[r]uth. We speak of “decolonizing” this and that and yet it is lost on us how we have all been disciplin[e]d into epistemic obedience by being silent (including myself). I have always believed that sooner or later I will wear out my welcome within a s[p]ace-pl[a]ce to which I was conditionally admitted as a student and then conditionally admitted as a “scho[l]ar”—a tourist with a passport whose welcome has an [e]xpiration. Knowing that I will have lost more than I will ever have gained in Gringodemia, I know that I mu[s]t not remain silent. So, I can love one and not hate [t]he other. Anti-Palestinian is inevitably anti-Mexican Amer[i]can.<sup>98</sup> The WCC cannot stand silent when we work-with Palesti[n]ian students too—they need the WC’s reassuranc[e] that they are indeed welcomed. If the WCC remains silent, the doors of the WC cannot be open to anyone and it cannot be a WC in the *non-name of all*. Entanglements and complicities with such rhetorics of assemblage mean a re-entrenching of a law of what and who can be in-common. It raises the question: What does it mean to be born a human being, of which means the welcoming of an-other is conditional and that to have something in-common with an-other is predicated on formal representations of [You]? So, I can have love for all people and yet hate settler colonialism and the settler mindset anywhere it exists and in any form. The silence of the WC is loudly haunting within an institution that as Lorde would say will *grind you out* either way. Initiate decolonizing archival impressions!

It is my hope that as WC directors, scholars, and consultants you feel inclined to pick up, hold onto, learn from, redefine, and explore what archival research and decolonizing archival impressions can mean in your context. If archives are *epistemological experiments*, by the same token they can be an experiment for *an-other archive*. What is stake is the *possibilities of new stories*—an-other archive. The ethic arrives, if it ever does, in the form of a question: How do we reposition the contents of archives so that we can position ourselves in relation to it *otherwise*? If the WC excavates slowly and deeply, it will find within the WC archive a similar appeal by Joseph Harris who argued that the role of the WC is to teach students how to “reposition themselves in relation to several continuous and conflicting discourses” (1990, p. 275). An archive approach lends itself to such an endeavor. The ethic couched in the question, which extends both to traditional and nontraditional methods of archival research, is that of haunting back and struggling toward possibilities of *an-other archive*. Initiate decolonizing archival impressions to create a clearing for a zone of wor(l)ding in the WC—a space and place where the doors of the WC are open to anyone, where best practices reflect a preparation of thinking, feeling, and



being-with everyone (*wherever they may be* and in the *non-name of all*), and where diverse wor(l)dings can get to work.

I write knowing words and ideas are not enough. In these times, which is as clichéd as saying as old as time, hope is clouded, and the fog of struggle is dense. As I prepare for the thick of winter here in Utah, the cultural milieu of silence I find myself surrounded by today reminds me of the silence that comes with the heavy snow that absorbs sound waves and lowers ambient noise. I have found that such moments afford a degree of clarity, particularly insofar that it demands I contemplate how to be-with self. In the echo chamber of silence that is WCS, I wonder, how is that working for [You]? Your silence will not protect you from a story [We] are all part of and in even if we do not want to be or as it occurs in a faraway land. “White people are in the story too” (A. Gordon, 2008, pp. 189, 205). I hope that when that day arrives—will it ever have—[You] search for and listen deep and well to the absent presence and trapped voices in the air pockets of life and death whose surreptitious returns are creating a slow hemorrhage into the idea that silence will protect you. Perhaps then you will come to know what the racialized and minoritized have long known, that [Earth] is a wounded/ing space-place. [We] are “still in the cemetery” (SoM, p. 142). Higher education may have allowed me to physically make it out of the LRGV, but I do not have to be epistemically obedient in Gringo-land or to Gringo-centers. Today, I turn to writing, despite the im/possibilities, because that is my way of haunting back.

An archival impression. “The explosion will not happen today. . . . It is too soon . . . or too late” (Fanon, 1986, *BSWM*, p. 9). So, I leave you, my reader, with this: How will you pick up, hold on to, learn from, and hopefully pass along archives and (decolonizing) archival impressions and an *epistemological framework for the haunted and deep rhetoricity*? How you do will determine, yes, whether both live-on and flourish, but more importantly it will establish how we foster a community of care and engage in wor(l)ding projects *otherwise*. Such a people-and-Earth-possessed longing is a doing-imagining, a praxis-theory. “Too late. Everything is anticipated, thought out, demonstrated, made the most of” (p. 121). Will [We/arth] ever have arrived? That is a futuristic praxis, not a brown(ed) cry, but [We/arth]-ly one. While [We] are a/waiting, might [We] retain that “fire through self-combustion” through an enduring and ongoing process of a slow and deep (de/re)-composition (p. 11)? For me, wor(l)ding is nothing more than recognizing and acknowledging wor(l)ding is human work that can *take* and make *space-place otherwise*. Overall, archives and (decolonizing) archival impressions and an *epistemological framework for the haunted and deep rhetoricity* has less to do with human being as a noun and more to do with being human as praxis of thinking, feeling, and being-with an-other, *wherever they may be* and in the *non-name of all*.<sup>99</sup> Such a praxis and archive in the making is grounded in a truth: *we are all in the process of arriving, approaching with neither a time of arrival nor a destination point given, or a given.*



So, why reshare the *stories-so-far* from my archive? I have gone from walkings-talkings (“On the Cusp of Invisibility”) to creating presence from absence and sound from silence (“Creating”) to hauntings as a framework (“Haunted/ing Genealogies”) to *shadow work* (“Shadow Work”) to (decolonizing) archival impressions (this essay), all because I continue to research and search for hope in the archival impressions of my archive. For [You], the WCC, it might afford the opportunity to go from a Gringo-Center to An-Other Center. We must initiate impressions to leave behind evidence of the work we chose to carry out *otherwise* and to provide a pathway towards the *possibilities of new stories*. One must have hope for and struggle to labor toward the *possibilities of new stories*—*an-other* archive.

## NOTES

1. While I recognize and acknowledge that the conceptual terms “impressions” and “archival impressions” preexist this project and are utilized elsewhere and otherwise (see Derrida, “Archive Fever”), I derived inspiration for archival impressions both from modern/ colonial and settlerizing situations and settler rhetoricity themselves as well as from personal experiences including encounters, interactions, and engagements.

2. See Mignolo and Walsh (2018), p. 20.

3. I would like to thank the special issue editors, Glenn and Andrea, as well as the reviewers, for helping me see this essay through. Ultimately, this essay stems from much needed dialogue with Neisha-Anne Green and Marlene Galván. So, a special thanks to them.

4. See Rickert (2013), p. 9.

5. See A. Garcia (2004), p. 27.

6. See Spivak (1988), “Can the Subaltern Speak,” p. 281.

7. In “Orientalism Reconsidered,” Edward Said proposes an “epistemological critique” between the “development of a historicism” and the practice of imperialism that involves the “incorporation and homogenization of histories” (101). I argue the words “incorporation” and “homogenization” invite and lends itself to a theory of archival impressions to contend with the unfolding of designs and its technologies in local forms and conditions.

8. See Browne (2021); Cvetkovich (2003); Fukushima (2019); Massey (2005); Mignolo & Walsh (2018); Rohrer (2016); Stoler (2002).

9. See John Henry Newman (1852), who outlined the central principles of the university: “training good members of society,” “purifying the national taste,” and “facilitating the exercise of political power” (p. 206).

10. See Mignolo (2018), “Decoloniality and Phenomenology,” p. 377.

11. See Thiong’o (2013), *In the Name of the Mother*, p. 18; Thiong’o (2011), *Dreams in a Time of War*, p. 65; Barthes (1982), pp. 80, 103, 110; Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (2020), p. 24; hooks,

*Talking Back* (2015), p. 28; hooks, *All About Love* (2001a), pp. 94, 101; Baldwin; Fanon, *The Wretched* (2004), pp. 36, 188–189; Rivera (1992), p. 147.

12. See Wideman (2001), p. 643.
13. See Derrida (1995), pp. xviii, 11–14, 60.
14. See Arellano, Cortez, & García (2022).
15. See Endres & Senda-Cook (2011), p. 260.
16. See hooks (2001b) for more insight on homeplace.
17. See Mignolo and Walsh (2018), p. 149.
18. See Lyons (2010), p. 2.
19. See Royster (2000), p. 43.
20. See Gordon (2001), *Existentialia*, p. 15.
21. See Ahmed (2017), *Living*, p. 2.
22. See Mignolo & Tlostanova (2012), p. 79.
23. See Mignolo & Walsh (2018), p. 20.
24. See Mignolo & Tlostanova (2012), p. 7.
25. See Haraway (1988), p. 584.
26. Such an idea was advanced by Kitaro Nishida and is echoed by Fanon (“We are in the world” | “I am the world!”) as well as Wordsworth (“the world is too much with us”).
27. See Mignolo & Walsh (2018), pp. 9, 28, 63–65.
28. See Till (2012), p. 6.
29. See Rohrer (2016, p. 189).
30. Kristin Arola recently gave a presentation on a slow composition at the 2023 CWCON.
31. See Baldwin (1984), *Notes*, p. xii; Hall (1996), pp. 169–170.
32. See Barthes (1982), p. 100.
33. See Derrida (1995), p. 18.
34. See Derrida (1995), p. 212.
35. See Spivak (1994), “Responsibility,” p. 23.
36. See Derrida (1995), p. xvii.
37. See Ahmed (2012), *On Being Included*, p. 2.
38. See Paredes (1958), p. 25.
39. See Haraway (1988), p. 584.
40. See Anzaldúa (1999), p. 58.
41. See Cushman (2013), p. 129.
42. See Escobar (2020).
43. See Alexander & Mohanty (2010), p. xxviii; Escobar (2020), p. 16.
44. See Rivera (1992), p. 275.
45. See Cortez & García (TBA).
46. See Holland (2000), pp. 3–4.
47. See Mignolo & Walsh (2018), pp. 7, 136.

48. See Derrida (2016), p. xxxvi.
49. See A. Gordon (2008), p. 5; Fanon, *BSWM* (2004), p. 15.
50. See Lugones for more insight on playful world traveling as well as Maldonado-Torres for generous reciprocity.
51. See Corder (1985), pp. 16–18, 23, 25, 26, 28, 31; Acosta (2012), pp. 104–105.
52. See Ahmed (2017); Morrison (1993).
53. Mignolo (2011b), “Epistemic Disobedience,” p. 14.
54. See Devet (2022); Patel (2021), pp. 56, 83, 112; Grande (2018), p. 48; Peña (2022).
55. See Taussig (1999), *Defacement*, pp. 2–8.
56. García et al. (2023); García (TBA).
57. See Ambo & Beardall (2022).
58. See Green & Condon (2022), p. 145.
59. See Parks (2000); Brittenham (2001).
60. Baker-Bell et al. (2022), p. 123; Wynters (2003), p. 271; hooks (2001b), p. 91.
61. See Spivak (1994), “Responsibility.”
62. See Fanon, *TW* (2004), pp. 157, 181, 249.
63. See Mignolo (2007), “Delinking,” p. 498; Tsing (1993), *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*, p. 31; Tuck & Yang (2012), p. 21.
64. See Quijano (2007), p. 177.
65. This is why García and Cortez ask, “Is the only predisposition to think [about] rhetoric and politics from modern/colonial myths and productions?” (2020, p. 103).
66. See Mignolo (2007), “Delinking,” p. 500.
67. See Cusicanqui (2012), pp. 98, 102, 104.
68. See Mignolo & Walsh (2018), p. 149.
69. See Veracini (2010), p. 15; Mignolo (2011a), *DSWM*, p. 188.
70. Mignolo & Walsh (2018), p. 136.
71. See Raymond Williams (1977).
72. See M. Harris (1985), p. 7.
73. See Endres & Senda-Cook (2011), p. 260.
74. See Mignolo (2005), p. 11.
75. See Grande (2018), pp. 47–48; Peña (2022), pp. 21, 69; Patel (2021), pp. 56, 105; Mignolo (2011a), p. 141; Yang (2017), pp. xiii, xiv–xvi, 25–37, 62.
76. See Mignolo & Walsh (2018), pp. 212, 223.
77. Bawarshi & Pelkowski (1999) got to the bottom of the *idea of the writing center*, questioning its role of remediation, its entanglements with instruction, and its complicities with reproducing colonial situations.
78. See Fanon (2004): “It [decolonization] cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we discern the movements which give its historical form and content” (*TW*, p. 36).

79. See Mignolo & Walsh (2018), pp. 20, 108.
80. See Camarillo (2022), “An Idea.”
81. Coloniality, differing from colonization as a reference to historical periods and places of conquest, identifies a logical structure of domination, management, and control as a new pattern of power ensembled around an axis of the idea of race, epistemic racism, modern/colonial designs (see Quijano, “CMR,” 2007; Mignolo, “Delinking,” 2007). Decolonization and decoloniality have several points of convergences and divergences. Geopolitical and economic decolonization and epistemic decolonization mark one point of divergence (see *The Idea*, p. 85; also see *DSoWM*, pp. 52–54).
82. See Fanon (2004): “Decolonization, therefore, implies the urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation” (*TW*, p. 2).
83. See Till (2012), p. 6; García & Kirsch (2022), p. 252.
84. See Derrida (1995), pp. xviii, 12–13.
85. See A. Gordon (2008), pp. 51, 190, 206.
86. See Derrida (1995), p. 202.
87. Derrida (1995) wrote, if “one could count on what is coming, hope would be but the calculation of a program” (p. 212; also see p. 19).
88. See Fukushima (2019), pp. 14–15.
89. See Haraway (1988), p. 584.
90. See Spivak (1994), “Responsibility,” p. 45.
91. This is, however, not to say that some have not contended with the idea of race and racism. See Barron & Grimm (2002); Bawarshi & Pelkowski (1999); Condon (2012); Davila (2006); Dees et al. (2007); Diab et al. (2012); Diab et al. (2013); Faison & Trevino (2017); Fremo (2010); Geller et al. (2007); Zhang et al. (2013); Suhr-Sytsma & Brown (2011).
92. See Mignolo (2011a), *DSWM*, p. 214; Spivak (1994), “Responsibility,” p. 61.
93. Baca (2008), *Mestiz@ Scripts*, pp. 230, 238; Baca (2010), “te-ixtli,” pp. 4–5.
94. See North (1984), pp. 441, 444; L. Gordon (2007), p. 123, p. 137.
95. An homage to Fanon: “Too late . . . Too late!” (p. 121); “You come too late, much too late” (p. 122).
96. See Taussig (1991), *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*, pp. 4–5.
97. See A. Gordon (2008), pp. 51, 190, 205.
98. Fanon (1986), *BSWM*, p. 122.
99. See Wynters (2003).

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