

RISING  
UP,

*Re-Existences, Sowings, and Decolonial Cracks*

LIVING  
ON

CATHERINE E.  
WALSH



RISING  
UP,

LIVING  
ON

BUY

ON DECOLONIALITY a series edited by  
Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh

On Decoloniality interconnects a diverse array of perspectives from the lived experiences of coloniality and decolonial thought/praxis in different local histories from across the globe. The series is concerned with coloniality's global logic and scope and with the myriad of decolonial responses and engagements that contest coloniality/modernity's totalizing violences, claims, and frame, opening toward an otherwise of being, thinking, sensing, knowing, and living; that is, of re-existences and worlds-making. Aimed at a broad audience, from scholars, students, and artists to journalists, activists, and socially engaged intellectuals, On Decoloniality invites a wide range of participants to join one of the fastest-growing debates in the humanities and social sciences that attends to the lived concerns of dignity, life, and the survival of the planet.

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# RISING UP,

# LIVING ON

Re-Existences,  
Sowings,  
and Decolonial Cracks

CATHERINE E.  
WALSH

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For María Lugones, ancestor-spirit,  
the conversations begun moons ago and  
those that continue now with your tango  
en la luz de la luna.

In memory of bell hooks, Diane Nelson, and Gustavo Esteva.

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## GRATITUDES

*Gratitude* seems a more appropriate word than *acknowledgment*. My desire here is not just to acknowledge, recognize, and give credit. More deeply, it is to express my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to those who have accompanied me in this experientially grounded venture of living-writing/writing-living.

Several years ago, I came across the Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo's concept-term *escrevivência*, a portmanteau of *escrita* and *vivência*. This is life written in one's experience, an experience that, of course, is never solitary or lived alone. And, at the same time, it is writing that writes the world in which one thinks, feels, struggles, and lives. My first gratitude, then, is to Evaristo for this concept-as-praxis. She gave me not only a way to name the weave of writing and living that I have long felt but also a way to write living and live writing, most especially in these pandemic-ridden times. In the almost two years that I dedicated myself practically full time to this book, writing became a force of light and life to create, construct, reflect, relate, and re-member; to resist, persist, exist, re-exist, and sow life despite and in the fissures and cracks of a system that intentionally drives hopelessness, fear, individuation, division, violence, and death.

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chaos, and her brighter-than-bright and larger-than-life moon that seems to give reason, sense, and meaning to cycles of everyday existence—mine and those of the beings, human and otherwise, that make my-our space in Guápulo a special place of serenity and care, of loving and living.

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Finally, gratitude to all who accompany me and those whom I accompany—each in our own territory, calendar, and material and spiritual space and place—in sowing life in these times of destruction, dispossession, violence, war, and death, in making and widening fissures and cracks in coloniality's seemingly impenetrable wall, and, above all, in rising up re-existences, invoking and convoking those that came before, and giving force to the otherwise present-past that resist and persist living on.

## BEGINNINGS

The world needs other stories.

—CORINNE KUMAR

How many stories have we been told?<sup>1</sup> How many stories have been shrouded, silenced, and untold? And what about all those distorted stories that form part of the master narrative, the myth of nation-state, universalism's political discourse, and coloniality's global project all wrapped up as one? Those stories constitutive of the enduring colonial legacy and devastation, and most especially the enduring legacy and devastation that is the colonization of the mind? The Pakistani feminist Corinne Kumar reminds us of these stories, while calling forth the many others that we need to exist and re-exist in a world where existences outside and in the fissures and cracks of the dominant story line are denied.

I seek these latter stories, the herstories and theirstories, the stories recounted and shared, the stories that are mine, and all those constructed walking with others present and past. I seek the stories that unsettle and that crack coloniality, that re-member that which has been dis-membered, and those that weave decolonizing paths. Of course, the stories in and of themselves are not enough; yet their gathering is part of the beginnings.

I grew up in a white, working-class family of mixed immigrant origins. From the time I can remember, the origin stories that I was told made evident not only the difference in roots—Irish, rural Nova Scotian, peasant Lithuanian—but also the lived tensions among them. For my father, who proudly identified with the male genealogy of the first, there was a hierarchy of whiteness and social status at play in which the latter two—reflection of the female lineage—were constantly demeaned. Moreover, and as occurs in many families, there is another ancestry that remained negated. This, as I have come to learn in more recent years, is tied to the historical presence of free Black people in Nova Scotia, including in my paternal grandmother's own genealogy.

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My childhood was lived in two small towns in central Massachusetts, one beside the other and both on lands dispossessed from the Nipmuc Tribal Nation.<sup>2</sup> I never knew this story of the land until now. As I was finishing this book, I realized that I had never been told—nor had I asked—about the memory-life that gave origin to this territory-land. A search brought me to a 2016 article in a local newspaper that led me to a detailed research study published in the *International Journal of Historical Archeology* and to the Nipmuc Nation’s webpage.<sup>3</sup> The story is fragmented and it is long. I will only retell here some of its pieces.

Magunkaquog—what in 1846 became Ashland, the town where I lived from the age of about three or four until eighteen—was the seventh of fourteen “praying plantations” or “praying Indian villages” established by the English missionary John Eliot between 1650 and 1675 to aid in the conversion of the Indian population. As the Nipmuc Nation details, Eliot believed that by removing the Native peoples from their tribal villages and creating towns for them, the Natives would eventually forsake their “ungodly” ways and emulate the English. Here “the native people were forbidden to practice their traditional ways, wore English style clothes, lived in English style homes and attended the Puritan church.” The reasons for voluntarily moving to these towns were varied, including “protection from Mohawk attacks, curiosity about English ways, economic survival, education, and the availability of food and clothing.”<sup>4</sup> While many Nipmuc made strategic alliances with Eliot and later with the English colonialists—even fighting on their side in the various wars—these alliances did not eliminate the lived reality of colonial violence, including the ongoing dispossession of Nipmuc lands, nor did they necessarily wipe out the Nipmuc’s own agency, spirituality, cosmology, knowledge, and sense of collective subjectivity and being.

Still, and although the story is fragmented, what is known says much about the patterns and deep roots of settler colonial power and dispossession. In 1715 Harvard University “bought” Magunkaquog. “Harvard’s knowledge of the Magunkaquog community is not surprising given the close association between Eliot, the college, and its charter mission to Christianize the Indians.” Yet the reasons for the “purchase” are not totally clear. Stephen Mrozowski, Holly Herbst, David Brown, and Katherine Priddy suggest that they were most likely tied up with a “larger political drama” between New England leaders, missionaries, and the English government.<sup>5</sup>

The deed of the “sale” of Magunkaquog’s eight thousand acres (the original of which is still housed in Harvard’s archives) included fifteen Native signatories, one of whom was found dead the following day, hung by his own

belt. Evidence suggests not only that a group of the Nipmuc Nation opposed the deal but also that the purchase itself was shrouded in illegalities and questions of settler colonial power. Harvard held on to the property until the mid-eighteenth century, leasing parts to English colonists for farming. It seems, however, that the “Christian Indians” stayed on the land, even after it passed into private ownership in 1749.<sup>6</sup>

What does it mean to grow up on dispossessed land, I ask today, land that, according to this archaeological study, included—not far from my childhood home—a Nipmuc meetinghouse and its religious-spiritual grounds? And why were these stories of land and life never mentioned in school and generally obscured—at least for me and, I suspect, for most if not all non-Nipmuc town residents—for practically three hundred years? Is this not part of the master narrative, the global project of colonization-civilization that replaces memory with distorted *histories* that endure in and through a colonizing of the mind?

As is probably the case throughout Turtle Island (North America), the violences of ongoing settler colonialism and dispossession have continued with the years. In 1917 the Nyanza Chemical Plant and Waste Dump was constructed on thirty-five acres of these same Nipmuc lands, where it continued until 1978. Nyanza became in 1982 one of the first ten “superfund” sites designated for cleanup by the Environmental Protection Agency. As an agency report details, Nyanza generated “large volumes of industrial wastewater containing high levels of acids and numerous organic and inorganic chemicals, including mercury, leading to soil and groundwater contamination. Over 45,000 tons of chemical sludges generated by Nyanza’s wastewater treatment processes, along with spent solvents and other chemical wastes, were buried on site.”<sup>7</sup> The area with the largest amount of buried waste and exposed sludge is referred to as the Megunko Hill section, the same hill on which the Nipmuc meetinghouse once stood.

I don’t recall hearing about the plant or its dangers when I was growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet it was there in close proximity, behind the high school and next to a baseball field where many played and where many cooled off in or ice-skated on the multicolored waters of the small adjacent pond, a chemical water pool. Today the grave health problems suffered by many who were Ashland residents during Nyanza’s operation and its aftermath, including my own family, are increasingly known. Nonetheless, the deeper significance for the Nipmuc Nation is most often rendered invisible. I can’t help but ask whether the plant’s destruction of land, water, and life is not part of the continual colonial legacy of violation, denigration, and dispossession.

There are some voices, however, that are weaving the relation. In my search, I came across mention of the artist Dan Borelli's project of Ashland-Nyanza that endeavors to give presence to the social history long hidden. In 2016 Borelli inaugurated a memorial healing garden on Megunko Hill in between where the meetinghouse and the chemical dye plant once stood. At the inauguration, members of the Nipmuc Nation performed a healing ceremony in this garden, a ritual of forgiveness,<sup>8</sup> a ceremony of memory, re-membering, and re-memorialization, of putting together the fragments and pieces that colonial violences have dis-membered.

I now know that I carry this story of colonial violence in my body and my mind, not by choice but by land, inheritance, and birth, and by obliviousness and ignorance without question. Encountering these pieces hidden and not known to me until now is a gift; a gift that opens cracks in the oblivion that coloniality perpetuates and delivers, and the innocences it enables and allows. Although I left Ashland in 1970 and have not returned since, the colonial weight of its story is now part of my herstory. Reclaiming the balance of this, and of all the stories that I—and *we*, including the readers here—have not been told, is a necessary step in understanding that coloniality is not a metaphor, to paraphrase Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang.<sup>9</sup> It is embodied, situated, and lived. Whether we like it or not, it is constitutive in a myriad of ways of who each one of us is: of those whom coloniality works to oppress, those whom it works to privilege, those whom it works to co-opt and capture, and all those who find themselves among or in between oppression, privilege, co-optation, assimilation, inclusion's ephemeral promise-hope, or western modernity's civilizing project, universalizing grip, and imperializing frame.<sup>10</sup>

While coloniality is everywhere, it is differentially embodied, situated, experienced, and lived. Indigenous peoples, African descendants, people of color, and women—most especially women of color—know this all too well, especially when their very existence and humanity are questioned, dismissed, and denied. Yet how often do those not marked by the colonial difference recognize their situatedness, embodiment, experience, and envelopment in coloniality's matrices of power, including its societal structures, institutions, and knowledge frames, and recognize the plurality—rather than unicity—of world-senses and lifeways? I am not suggesting rhetorical acknowledgments of settler guilt, as if such acknowledgment could somehow ameliorate history and reconcile colonial blame.<sup>11</sup> Rather, I am referring to the work to be done to disrupt, transgress, and break apart—to crack—coloniality's permanence and hold, work that necessarily entails, following George Yancy, an unsuturing of “whiteness as the transcendental norm.”<sup>12</sup>

All this is part of the project of this book. Its idea began a number of years ago. However, its situated, embodied, storied, and lived character made it, for all too long, a work always in process and progress, a praxis within—rather than about—existence difficult to compose on computer or paper.

Several years ago, I put a hammer next to me on the desk. The hammer keeps present the doing of cracking and the labor of crack-making; that is, the work to be done in the multiple contexts and situated spheres of lived life (including, but not only, in teaching, writing, and the university), the work of doing *with* and that of thinking *with and from*—not studying *about*—other crack makers, and the situated-embodied work with and from myself. And the hammer reminds me that to crack coloniality means, first off, to crack and fissure the coloniality that is part of me. It is to recognize how coloniality has invaded and permeated my existence and being without permission, approval, and most often without my awareness or recognition. It is to comprehend how coloniality is naturalized in/as existence itself. And it is to consciously struggle to disrupt this naturalization and totalization, including—to paraphrase Kumar—its institutionalization and universalization of the supremacy of the white, the European, the US “American,” the Christian, the West; an institutionalization, universalization, and violence “nationalized” in territories throughout the globe.

## Coloniality

Coloniality is the concept that the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano introduced in the late 1980s and early 1990s to refer to the constitution of a model and pattern of domination and power that began in 1492 with the so-called conquest (read: invasion) of the Cross and Crown, the colonization of the lands referred to today as the Caribbean and Latin America, and the subsequent reordering of the world with Europe at the center.<sup>13</sup> The ideas of race and gender were—and are—fundamental to the coloniality of power; its social classification and othering of populations; its control of labor, subjectivity, authority, and knowledge; and its constitutive entwine with modernity and capitalism, both of which took form with and through coloniality starting in 1492. The practices and policies of genocide and enslavement, the pillage of life and land, and the denials and destruction of humanity, spirituality, and cosmo-existence became the *modus operandi* of this model of western Christian civilization that later traveled the globe.<sup>14</sup> As I argue in this book, systemic racism and heteropatriarchy are component parts, as are the binaries that profess to fix and determine both gender and nature.

*Coloniality*, as such, is not a descriptive term to refer to the practices of domination in and of a colonial past. It is part of the hidden stories, the local histories that became and continue to become global designs.<sup>15</sup> Coloniality is the complex matrix or matrices of power that, in its constitutive interweavings with capitalism, patriarchy, and the ongoing project of modernity, continues to configure and reconfigure, to control and order existences, knowledges, nature, and life throughout the world. In this sense, *coloniality* is not a modern replacement word for *colonialism*. Rather, it is a decolonial conceptual framework, logic, and analytic for understanding and intervening in the systems and structures of power in which all of us are part, systems and structures deeply marked by race, gender, and heteropatriarchy, as well as class; by the dispossession of bodies and land; and by western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence.

Coloniality in no way precludes or erases the specifics of settler colonialism as it has been constructed and lived, most especially in what the settlers named Canada and the United States. While settler colonialism is distinct from the coloniality of power established in sixteenth-century South and Central America, its patterns of power and systems of violence—including genocide, pillage, dispossession, expropriation, enslavement, racialization, and dehumanization—are, without a doubt, related. In fact, and as Richard Gott argues, Latin America is, in many ways, also a white settler society since Europeanization, the importation of European migrants, and the extermination of Native peoples were central parts of the nineteenth-century history of many nations, including Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela.<sup>16</sup> Coloniality is, in this sense, an analytic that connects the broader struggles of Indigenous nations in the North and South, a connection that builds what Emil Keme refers to as the “transhemispheric Indigenous bridge” that is Abya Yala (or Abyayala) and in which the plurality of territories, memories, stories, and struggles remains.<sup>17</sup>

My approach to coloniality in this book offers and invites such connections. Moreover, it brings together my own processes and experiences of learning to unlearn and relearn, and of social, political, educational, epistemic, and existence-based questioning, unsettling, unsuturing, and struggle lived first in the United States and, in the last almost three decades, in Ecuador. I recognize and think *from and with* these territorial groundings, which is distinct from studying or writing *about*. And, at the same time, I contemplate the global nature of the colonial matrix of power and the threads woven with decolonizing struggles throughout the world.

*Cracking coloniality*, in this sense, and as I will show throughout this text, references the decolonial work that exists, is taking place, and needs to be done. It is not about decolonization as a linear process or point of arrival, or as a metaphor that, as Tuck and Yang rightfully argue, all too often “supplants prior ways of talking about social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches which decenter settler perspectives,” with little or no regard for how decolonization wants something different from these forms of justice, criticism, and critique.<sup>18</sup> To crack coloniality means, for me, to open fissures in this totalizing system or matrix of power, and to widen further the fissures that already exist in coloniality’s supposedly impenetrable wall. The fissures and cracks are about the situated and embodied questions and work we need to do with ourselves and about the questions and work to be done with respect to social structures, institutions, and practices, including those related to knowledge; to being, becoming, and belonging; and to existence itself, particularly in these present times. The fissures and cracks evidence actionality, agency, resistance, resurgence, and insurgent forms of subjectivity and struggle; they are the spaces of creation against and despite the system, of hope against despair, of life living up against coloniality’s present-day project of violence-dispossession-war-death all intertwined; of re-existence in times of de-existence. The fissures and cracks are not the solution but the possibility of otherwise, those present, emerging, and persistently taking form and hold.

## **Existence, Re-existence, and Existences Otherwise**

Coloniality necessarily raises existential questions that are situated in life, in the lived contexts of being in a world—and being-in-the-world—when one’s very existence is continually threatened and called into question. Frantz Fanon spoke to this problem well, as have a number of contemporary African philosophers of existence, most especially Lewis R. Gordon, Sylvia Wynter, Paget Henry, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres. As many anticolonial, decolonial, and community-based feminists, and feminists of color, including Corinne Kumar, M. Jacqui Alexander, María Lugones, Laura E. Pérez, Rita Segato, Gloria Anzaldúa, Gloria Wekker, Sylvia Marcos, Saidiya Hartman, Aura Cumes, Breny Mendoza, Ochy Curiel, Lorena Cabnal, Oyèrónké Oyewùmi, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Tsaywa Cañamar, and Betty Ruth Lozano Lerma, among others present in this text, have made clear, these struggles of

and for existence are rooted not only in the problem of race but, more crucially, in the intimate ties of racialization, heteropatriarchy, and gendering. Likewise, they are about reconstituting relationality with and among the human, nonhuman, and spiritual worlds.

As such, I ask, what might it mean to take seriously Pérez's plea to "unthink and rethink braver, more truthful, and more deeply human understandings of being and existence"?<sup>19</sup> "To move past the boundaries of alienation" and toward "the promise that oppositional knowledges and political mobilizations hold," as Alexander suggests, enabling crossings and relation between the secular and sacred, the human and nonhuman, the embodied and dis-embodied, between tradition versus modernity, "us" versus "them," and the many other oppositions and separations of existence and everyday life?<sup>20</sup> And, following Gordon, how are we to understand the existence-based questions conditioned by Blackness—especially those "premised upon concerns of freedom, anguish, responsibility, embodied agency, sociality, and liberation"—as realities and questions of humanity, of struggles to live on evoking and invoking those that came before?<sup>21</sup>

All of these questions interweave with mine. While the queries I raise in the pages that follow are many, there are two principal ones that orient and guide: How are we to sow and grow existence, re-existences, and existences otherwise in, from, and making decolonial cracks, opening toward and revealing radically distinct arrangements of knowing, theorizing, thinking, and doing, and of being, becoming, belonging, and living in relation, particularly in these present times? And how are we to understand this embodied and situated praxis as constitutive of the necessary and ongoing processes of learning to unlearn that which coloniality has naturalized and inculcated, and of learning to relearn from, with, and in coloniality's decolonial and decolonizing outside, borders, fissures, and cracks?

My reference to existence here takes me beyond ontology. Like Fanon, I am not interested in the individual and individualized construct of *Being* or in the phylogeny of the species.<sup>22</sup> I am also not interested in Eurocentered constructions of ontological existence that, all too often, find their ground in what Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze describes as a capitalist metaphysics of consciousness and domination.<sup>23</sup>

My concern instead is with social existence, with sociohistorical, socioherstorical, and sociotheistorical considerations that—and not unlike Fanon's sociogeny—point to and are constitutive of existential struggles of and for life, struggles that emerge out of the negation, denial, and subjugation of one's existence; struggles resisting, existing, re-existing.

Re-existence is an actional idea that has its roots in the long horizon of struggle of Black and Indigenous communities. It was the Afro-Colombian artist-intellectual Adolfo Albán Achinte who introduced the term at a public event in Quito in 2005, making clear the way it interpolates and undoes coloniality's semblance of total and totalizing power. As he explains, re-existence refers to "the mechanisms that communities create and develop to invent daily life and power, in this way confronting the hegemonic project that since colonization until our present day, has inferiorized, silenced and negatively made visible existence. . . . Re-existence puts off center the established logics in order to look for, in the depth of cultures—especially Indigenous and Afro-descendant—the keys to forms of . . . organization and production that permit the dignifying and reinventing of life and its continued transformation."<sup>24</sup>

For Albán, it is in the specific context of the construction of Black subjectivities that re-existence takes meaning and form. "My argument," says Albán, "is that the enslaved did not just resist the system of enslavement, they configured a particular form of existence as a project of society and life, a project that is still evidenced today in Black ancestral communities. Black peoples fought for freedom and in this struggle they developed ways to exist, that is to be in the world in the condition of subjects."<sup>25</sup> Re-existence, in this sense, is part of the long horizon that continues into the present in racialized and discriminatory societies. It implies "living in 'other' conditions,"<sup>26</sup> to exist and not just resist—to re-exist resisting and to resist re-existing—to re-elaborate and build projects of society and life in adverse conditions, and to surpass and overcome these circumstances, resignifying and redefining life in conditions of dignity and self-determination: a re-existence as subjects and with others in radically distinct terms, confronting at the same time the biopolitic that controls, dominates, and commodifies subjects and nature.<sup>27</sup>

In a somewhat similar sense, the Brazilian geographer Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves began in 1998 to refer to what he termed "r-existence," this explained in a later text as "the spaces that were never conquered by the colonial invader . . . the spaces of freedom in the midst of slavery/servitude . . . that serve as bastions of r-existence; that is, a resistance that is not simply a reaction to the invader, but a form of r-existence because it incorporates new horizons of ethnic and peasant communities' own senses reinvented in these circumstances. These communities resist because they exist; therefore, they r-exist."<sup>28</sup>

Of course, the use and conceptualization of the term did not necessarily begin or end with Albán and Porto-Gonçalves. The Oxford online dictionary

maintains that the word *re-existence* first appeared in the mid-seventeenth century, in the work of the philosopher, poet, and theologian Henry More (1614–87). Its meaning: “renewed or resumed existence”; “a new or further existence.”<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, what interests me here is re-existence’s praxical and actional intentions and inventions; that is, the ways that people are sowing and resowing life, cultivating the possibilities of an otherwise, of social, cultural, political, epistemic, ethical, and existence-based affirmation.

How is re-existence rising up and living on today in societies deeply marked by the systemic violences of racism, gendering, Christianity, and heteropatriarchy? Of the continual dispossession of bodies, land, knowledge, and life in Native territories throughout the world? And what about the pluriversal of existences past and present that defy, contest, unsettle, and crack coloniality and its continual configuration and reconfiguration of power, including—but not only—in the colonial institutions of education, schooling, and state? These are some of the crucial questions and concerns of the book that you have in your hands.

## Modes of Writing and Organization

As I said at the outset of this introduction, this book is situated and embodied; it could not be otherwise. Consequently, its modes of writing are by no means usual. They too are situated, embodied, grounded, experienced, and lived, part of what Conceição Evaristo describes as *escrevivência*, a “writing engaged, committed to life, to living,” and to the relation with lived reality; a writing-living that denounces, disturbs, and calls out from one’s own historic processes and subjectivity.<sup>30</sup> The modes, moreover, assume a serpentine rather than lineal movement. I meander in and out of autobiographical narratives and narrations, personal letters and conversations, lived accounts, and weavings of thinking with authors, artists, students present and past, ancestor-guides, intellectual militants and activists, and political-epistemic, collective, communal, and community-based subjects, processes, practices, actions, and movements. In this weaving, I make no hierarchical distinctions; all are thinkers. The writing, in essence, is part of the cracking and of the existences and re-existences rising up and living on, processes within which I endeavor, through a pedagogy of questioning of sorts, to actively engage you, the reader. My writing, in this sense, intends to stir up, to unsettle, to implore, and to defy inaction and indifference.

The text is organized into five chapters. While each affords connections to the next, they can also be read and pondered on their own. I begin in chapter 1 with the force of cries, the presence of cracks, and their connections. They are cries of outrage, indignation, and dignified fury, mine woven with others; cries that denounce, define, and scream out against the present-day intertwinement of violence-dispossession-war-death and the targeted de-existences present and taking form; cries that detail coloniality's mutations, changing strategies, and reconfigurations, including in the time of COVID-19. Here the clamor of shared cries sounds the impetus and will to struggle, to resist and re-exist and not just survive. With these cries come the cracks, the debilitating of the wall, and the praxis of fissure.

Chapter 2 asks about and walks the intermeshed processes of decolonizing and deschooling. It is a narrative of sorts, thought and told through fragments of my own ongoing story of learning, unlearning, and relearning. I conceive the fragments as pieces of cloth, written on over many decades. The fragments are not meant to be pieced together into a whole since that would suture, close up, or bring to a finish not only the narrative but also the ongoing character, process, and doing of praxis and pedagogy that, in and through the chapter, unfold and take form. With the fragments, pieces of my own asking and walking, existences and educations otherwise take on lived form.

Chapter 3 traverses the binaries and boundaries of gender, race, nature, and knowledge. It is concerned with the intertwinements that coloniality/modernity has made and continues to make between and among these axes and their binaries of power. And it asks about the present-past practices, philosophies, and modes of lived existence that resist, persist, and re-exist, disrupting and transgressing what Alexander refers to as the "existential impasse," reassembling what belongs together.<sup>31</sup> In these ways, the chapter opens toward what often cannot be seen; these are the cracks but also the profound relations and interconnections that enable and call forth distinct ways of being, sensing, and thinking, and, most especially, of making and doing a feminist politics grounded in life, spirituality, and relationality.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the undoing of nation-state, acknowledging that state formations—whether neoimperial, neoliberal, progressive, or increasingly corporate—are what the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan calls "the spine of capitalist modernity" and "the cage of natural society."<sup>32</sup> Moreover, they are central pegs—with and through their binaries, borders, boundaries, and forced incorporation of peoples and land and, relatedly, their structures, institutions, knowledges, and practices—in the maintenance,

configuration, and reconfiguration of coloniality's global order. Here I ask about how the nation-state's naturalization and universal hegemonic hold is being undone from the land, on the ground, and with and through plurinational propositions. While the reflections open toward processes of thinking and doing in various territories of the globe, they give centrality to those I have been most closely engaged with in the Andes.

The book closes in chapter 5 with thoughts on, from, and with sowings, resowings, and cultivations of existences and re-existences. It gives attention to the prospects of growing an otherwise, a something else within the extant cracks. And it considers the ongoing decolonizing work of fissuring and cracking. In so doing, it weaves relation with the chapters that come before while, at the same time, offering reflections on how concrete, situated, and embodied subjects are planting life where there is death; making seedbeds of decolonial doing, thinking, and existing; practicing the sowing; and reconstituting the sense, hope, and possibility of life.

A short epilogue added in June 2022 as notes to readers shares some of the commotion lived as I finished the book's final review, opening reflections on the realities of these times, on present-past intertwinements, on territorial interconnections, and on relations of corporalities, subjectivities, and struggles for dignity and life in the lands that I, you, and we call home.

I invite the reader not only to peruse the pages that follow but also to engage with the text, to make it your own, adding your cries, questions, walking paths, traversings, undoings, plantings, and, above all, stories. As Kumar reminds us, "*The world needs other stories.*" But it also needs more people with hammers, more folks from different territories of the globe willing to assume and become part of the collective work and praxis of cracking coloniality's wall, opening, widening, and connecting the fractures, fissures, and cracks, which are the re-existences rising up and living on.

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## NOTES

### BEGINNINGS

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this book are my own.

- 1 Chapter epigraph is from Corinne Kumar, “The One Central Mountain: Universalisms in Political Discourse,” in *Asking We Walk: The South as New Political Imaginary, Book One: In the Time of the Earth*, 2nd ed., ed. Corinne Kumar (Bangalore: Streelekha, 2011), 284.
- 2 The Nipmuc, or “fresh water people,” occupied the interior portion of what is now Massachusetts and parts of Rhode Island and Connecticut. The original homelands included all of present-day central Massachusetts from the New Hampshire–Vermont borders and south of the Merrimac Valley to include Tolland and Windham Counties in Connecticut and the northwest portion of Rhode Island. To the east, the homelands included the Natick/Sudbury area going west to include the Connecticut River valley. See “A Brief Look at Our History,” Nipmuc Nation, accessed April 20, 2021, <https://www.nipmucnation.org/our-history>.
- 3 Bill Shaner, “A Hidden History Uncovered in Ashland,” *MetroWest Daily News* (Framingham, MA), June 26, 2016, <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/20160626/hidden-history-uncovered-in-ashland>; Stephen A. Mrozowski et al., “Magunkaquoq Materiality, Federal Recognition, and the Search for a Deeper History,” *International Journal of Historical Archeology* 13, no. 4 (2009): 430–63.
- 4 Nipmuc Nation, “Brief Look.”
- 5 Mrozowski et al., “Magunkaquoq Materiality,” 441.
- 6 Mrozowski et al., “Magunkaquoq Materiality,” 441.
- 7 “Superfund Site: Nyanza Chemical Waste Dump Ashland, MA,” US Environmental Protection Agency, accessed January 24, 2022, <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Cleanup&id=0100948>.
- 8 See Bill Shaner, “Nipmuc Healing Ceremony to Usher in Ashland-Nyanza Memorial Garden,” *Wicked Local Ashland*, June 12, 2016, <https://ashland.wickedlocal.com/news/20160612/nipmuc-healing-ceremony-to-usher-in-ashland-nyanza-memorial-garden>. Also see the project’s website: <http://www.ashlandnyanzaproject.com/>.

- 9 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
- 10 My reference to *western* in lowercase letters here and throughout this book is intentional, meant to wrest power from its capitalization.
- 11 Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization."
- 12 As Yancy explains, "Being un-sutured is a powerful concept as it implies, especially for whites, the capacity to tarry with the multiple ways in which their whiteness is a problem and to remain with the weight of that reality and the pain of that realization." George Yancy, "White Suturing, Black Bodies, and the Myth of a Post-racial America," *Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies*, 2018, <https://www.societyarts.org/white-suturing-black-bodies-and-the-myth-of-a-post-racial-america.html>.
- 13 See Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–80.
- 14 See my arguments in Catherine E. Walsh, "Decoloniality in/as Praxis," in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 16.
- 15 See Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- 16 Richard Gott, "The 2006 SLAS Lecture: Latin America as a White Settler Society," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 26, no. 2 (2007): 269–89.
- 17 Emil Keme, "For Abiyala to Live, the Americas Must Die: Toward a Trans-hemispheric Indigeneity," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 43.
- 18 Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization," 2.
- 19 Laura E. Pérez, *Eros Ideologies: Writings on Art, Spirituality, and the Decolonial* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 79.
- 20 M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 5.
- 21 Lewis R. Gordon, *Existential Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 10, 14, 164.
- 22 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. from the French by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967), 11.
- 23 Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Racism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 222.
- 24 Adolfo Albán Achinte, "Pedagogías de la re-existencia: Artistas indígenas y afrocolombianos," in *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re) existir y (re)vivir*, ed. Catherine Walsh (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2013), 1:455.
- 25 Adolfo Albán Achinte, *Sabor, poder y saber: Comida y tiempo en los valles afroandinos de Patía y Chota-Mira* (Popayán, Colombia: Universidad del Cauca, 2015), 39–40n27. Recalled here as well is Stephan Nathan Haymes's powerful text "Pedagogy and the Philosophical Anthropology of African-American Slave Culture," in *Not Only the Masters' Tools: African-American Studies in Theory and*

- Practice*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon, (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2006), 173–203.
- 26 Albán, *Sabor*, 40n27.
  - 27 Adolfo Albán Achinte, “Epistemes ‘otras’: Epistemes disruptivas?” *Revista Kula* 6 (2012): 30. Also see my citing of and thinking with Albán in Walsh, “Decoloniality in/as Praxis,” 18, 95.
  - 28 Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves, “Lucha por la Tierra: Ruptura metabólica y reapropiación social de la naturaleza,” *Polis: Revista Latinoamericana* 45 (2016), <http://journals.openedition.org/polis/12168>
  - 29 Lexico, s.v. “re-existence,” accessed May 17, 2022, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/re-existence>.
  - 30 Conceição Evaristo, “Conceição Evaristo: Imortalidade além de um título,” interview by Ivana Dorali, in *Mestre das Periferias: O encontro de Ailton Krenal, Conceição Evaristo, Nêgo Bispo e Marielle Franco (in memoriam)*, ed. Jailson de Souza e Silva (Rio de Janeiro: Eduniperferias, 2020), 153–54. Also see Conceição Evaristo, *Becos da memória* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Massa, 2006).
  - 31 Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 283.
  - 32 Abdullah Öcalan, *Democratic Confederalism* (London: Transmedia, 2011), 13.

#### CHAPTER ONE: CRIES AND CRACKS

- 1 Chapter epigraph is from Alixa García and Naima Penniman, “Who Decides?,” track 6 on *Intrinsic*, by Climbing PoeTree (2017), <https://climbingpoetree.bandcamp.com/track/who-decides>. Also see mediasanctuary, “Climbing Poetree ‘Who Decides?’,” YouTube, August 1, 2019, video, 5:55, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDJneLFbORc>.
- 2 “Bio,” Climbing PoeTree, accessed May 17, 2022, <http://www.climbingpoetree.com/bio/>.
- 3 María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 228.
- 4 Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 6.
- 5 José Elizondo and Karla Ávila, “Pienso, luego me desaparecen,” *El Fardadio*, September 26, 2015, <http://www.elfaradio.com/2015/09/26/pienso-luego-me-desaparecen/>.
- 6 The 2020 film *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, written and directed by Aaron Sorkin, affords a glimpse into some of the revolutionary postures and struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s and their tensions and contradictions.
- 7 Catherine Walsh, “(Des)humanidad(es),” *Alter/nativas*, no. 3 (2014): 2.
- 8 Arturo Villavicencio, “Hacia dónde va el proyecto universitario de la Revolución Ciudadana?,” in *El correísmo desnudo*, various authors (Quito: Montecristi vive, 2013), 217.
- 9 Here I recall the cries that Mayra Estévez describes as sonorous acts of rebellion against the colonial context and its dominant sonorities: “a vibration in defense.” Mayra Estévez, “Estudios sonoros en y desde Latinoamérica: Del régimen colonial de la sonoridad a las sonoridades de la sanación” (PhD diss.,